E.5.40

A DISCOURSE OF THE Gospel of Peace, AND OF THE Government of our own Spirits.

Being the substance of Divers

SERMONS,

FROM

EPHES. VI. 15.

AND

PROV. XVI. 32.

Lately Preached by

JOHN FALDO, Minister of the Gospel.

LONDON:

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MDCLXXXVII.

An Epiſtle Dedicatory to the Right Honourable and truly Religious Lady, the Lady *CLINTON.*

Madam,

IT is not worth the Errand of an Epiſtle Dedicatory of an Evangelical Diſcourſe, to tell the world of the Nobility and greatneſs of its deſired Suſceptor: Nor would ſuch an impertinent gawd at the entrance, much awaken and incourage your Honour to the peruſal of what follows in the Body of the Book.

And if I ſhould (as more genuine and congruous) tell your Ladiſhip, and thereby my Reader, of the Piety that ſhines in all the circumſtances of your Relations and Converſe, I muſt expect that your humble and ſelf-denying reflections on your ſelf (to which the moſt worthy are the moſt diſpoſed) would diſtaſte it, as too much bordering upon the too common flattery of Epiſtles Dedicatory, which ſeldom regard what is true, but what is plauſible. Yet if I am obliged to give ſome account

why I Dedicate this my poor undertaking, on ſo great a Subject, to your Ladiſhip, I am content to give you and my Reader ſome ſatisfaction. I have by your Honours favour, and the Conduct of a greater Providence been many years acquainted in my Miniſterial work and converſe with you, and divers of your Noble Family, as well as your Houſhold, and its circumſtances; on whom I have reaſon to believe my Concerns for your Spiritual and Eternal Welfare have not been waſted, but have produced or foſtered what hath been becoming the Goſpel of Chriſt. And I know not why that Husbandman ſhould be blamed whoſe prudence diſpoſes his beſt ſeed on that ground which his experience hath proved genuine and fruitful.

And (if it need it) I am content to crave pardon for ſaying that beſide your Ladiſhips Perſonal Converſation, and that of your Noble Siſter the Lady *Eleanor Hollis*, (whom nature and piety hath bound to ſo near a Converſe, that you know not well how to live aſunder) I cannot remember that I have heard in your Family to the meaneſt of your Servants one ſinful word, but obſerved ſo blameleſs a deportment that to ſay (their profeſſion added) there is a Church in your Houſe, or rather that your Hou-

Houſhold are fit matter for a Church, would not be beyond meaſured truth. And this I have ſaid as that which the conſideration of, hath been often grateful to me, but principally to engage perſons of your quality and character (as to ſerious profeſſion) to the like care in the choice and manage of their Houſholds, and not to excuſe themſelves from endeavouring it as a thing impoſſible. But *Madam*,

Beſides what is ſaid in the Title of the Book preſented to your Ladiſhip, which is almoſt all that can be ſaid to perſwade its acceptance (if the management of ſo great a Subject were anſwerable) I can ſay little to commend it to you. The Goſpel of *Peace*, and the Government of our *own* ſpirits meeting together, will certainly create ſo happy an experiment, as will little need, and be much above the acceſſions of what moſt men court and adore, becauſe they know no better.

Your Ladiſhip hath been many years in Chriſts School of inſtruction, which the Noble Families of *Clare* by Title, and *Hollis* by proper name (of which you are ſo principal a member) have not diſdained, but embraced equally with the moſt forward Profeſſors of Chriſtianity. This is not to be poſt-poned to the greateſt of your bleſ-

ſings in this world, of which no good account can be given, but by ſo learning Chriſt as to embrace and live *the truth as it is in Jeſus*. This carries with it the wiſdom, the comfort and fortitude of a Chriſtian in this life, and the well-grounded evidence of an intereſt in the conſummate bleſſedneſs of that which is to come.

If I alſo add, that you are not unacquainted with Chriſts School of affliction, it is but ſaying that Divine wiſdom hath given you the more means and advantages of learning, and being wiſe to Salvation; and that mark which none of Gods legitimate Children are without; a fruit of Gods faithfulneſs and fatherly care, which his beſt Children can no more be without, than infirm bodies without dieting and Medicines. Some ſilly people take that condition to be moſt happy, which is moſt eaſie for the preſent; and *that* the moſt accompliſhed wherein their moſt corrupt affections meet with no check, and their ſleep in the forgetfulneſs of God and their duty is moſt undiſturbed. Others (no more diſcerning than they) propoſe to themſelves, that if they can but clamber *any how* to greatneſs, and make their neſts on the mountains of this world; they dwell where thoſe vapours and ſtorms have nothing to do,

do, nor can find any place, that so much molest the meaner sort, that herd in the vallies. But *Madam*, you know, and are willing to know and have it known, that those great appearances have no such immunities, and that a moderation of spirit under adversities, and a holy improvement of them, is an aim and attainment much more rational and secure. *Blessed is the man whom thou chastnest, O Lord, and teachest out of thy Law; that thou mayest give him rest from the days of adversity, &c.* But I have almost forgotten that I am writing an Epistle of this nature, and seem to my self discoursing with your Ladiship after my wonted freedom. I shall add no more but my wishes, raised to sincere requests to the Father of Mercies, and the God of all Comforts, that as the following Treatise is more peculiarly directed to you, so you may more especially embrace the Duties and reap the Blessings which are the Privileges of it. That you may persevere in those ways of Evangelical Holiness, *i.e.* that obedience of Faith, which you have professed and espoused; and that your Paths may have that portion of the Righteous, which is *to shine brighter, and brighter, unto perfect day:* That all your Mercies may be filled with comforts, by him who

is the God and diſpoſer of both: That all your Relations may have a portion of real goodneſs, equal to, and beyond that of outward greatneſs: That your own Perſonal mercies may by that ſpring of Divine love from whence they derive, be rendred more ſweet, and your afflictions from the ſame cauſe, become leſs bitter. That *the God of all grace would ſupply all your need, according to the riches of his Glory by Jeſus Chriſt*, till you arrive at that place and eſtate, where no ſin, nor want, nor foe, nor affliction can enter.

Your Ladiſhips Servant

July 22d. 1687.

for Chriſts ſake,

JOHN FALDO.

AN

AN EPISTLE TO THE READER.

READER,

I Am not careful to restrain my Address or Application to the Pious, Candid, or Courteous Reader, knowing that Books published in Print, are past all inclosures. I think it therefore best to give thee that which thou mayest take without my farther *license, and most indefinitely interest thee in the account that follows.*

We have a long time last past been agitated so much in the dust and darkness of contention, and mutually reproaching and (one way or other) afflicting and grieving each other, that we have almost lost all notions and idea's of our selves, our neighbour and fellow Christian, but what these provocations, heats and passions

passions have created. And I wish I could say, that God and Religion too, *did not share in the same injuries, from the same causes. Give me leave to say, that tho Dissenters from (I would that truth could not add) and oppressors of each other, may take the fall, and bear the blows by* turns; *the God of Peace, the Prince of Peace, and the Gospel of Peace, are by every turn losers in their honour and interest, whoever wins.*

Methinks therefore (unless we cannot be weary of doing and suffering ill) it cannot be unseasonable to put you in remembrance of the Gospel of Peace, and the Government of our own spirits; nor my self all guilty of injury, or impertinence, if it could reach no higher than a mere Remembrancer. *Certainly peace is a most comprehensive blessing, and by all pretended to be desired, as the end of all their adventures and encounters they meet with therein. But as man by the fall, and its improvement from worse to worse, hath lost his knowledge and sense of the happiness that is real, and the way to it: So he has found (as he thinks) a peace in prospect, and the way to that. But who can express the blindness, the madness, the perverseness therein evident? What is the peace he thinks he has in his eye? It is the satisfying of his lusts, his unbridled,* unbounded *affections; and that by means as unrigh-*

righteous, as licentious, as pernicious to himself and others, as they are in themselves unreasonable and insatiable.

My business therefore in the following Tracts, is to perswade thee by the greatest evidence of truth and goodness, to seek peace where it is to be found; which the blessed Gospel of Christ only can shew thee, and the way to it; It being that (as the Apostle speaks) by which life and immortality is brought to light.

I have endeavoured to obviate every material Objection, as far as a Tract of so small a bulk, and my poor capacity could reach. But the great, tho latent Objections against entertaining this Evangelical Peace, which the mind besetted by its foolish and hurtful lusts knows not when they are answered, are, That there can be no peace in self-denial: No pleasure in mortifying these affections, the gratifyings of which is the only source of pleasure, or rather the pleasure it self: No rest in that Divine fulness we talk of, so much out of reach and view; every weighty thought of which is so terrible or troublesome: No gain or riches in the crossing of our espoused interests: No wisdom or policy in imagining the reduction of a world of men, from the methods they have been so long accustomed to, and hardned in. These Objections I shall answer to, with as great peremptoriness, and infinitely

finitely greater reaſon and evidence. What ſelf is the corruption of nature? What pleaſure is that which is but the tickling the itch of a lothſome and deſtructive diſeaſe? Where is reſt, if not in the fountain and center of all? What truth in manifeſt contradiction of all good and goodneſs? What intereſt is there in croſſing our great End, and being drowned in eternal perdition, for a pleaſant dream, or a ſhort and little graſp of earth and vanity?

Is it not horrid beyond expreſſion, to deſire, and madneſs to expect that God himſelf ſhould part with his honour to humour us? *and vilifie his holy and infinite perfections by (not only permitting, but) maintaining and countenancing a company of worms in thoſe diſorders that bid defiance to his wiſdom, truth, power over, and intereſt* in *his own creature; who by him was brought from nothing into being, all whoſe powers, ſupports, and comforts, derive from his fulneſs and bounty, who without his continuate concourſe and ſupplies could neither eat nor drink, nor move, nor love, nor hate, nor live?*

I could not forbear to ſtart thoſe ſecret vanities, which are the inward works and ſecret ſtrengths by which our great adverſary holds his prey, till a ſtronger than he makes men willing to be happy, by being delivered from those powers of darkneſs, and tranſla-

ted

ted into the Kingdom of the dear Son of God, who is the King of Righteouſneſs, and Prince of Peace. *And what is this Kingdom of the dear Son of God but what is deſcribed by this Goſpel of Peace?*

Certainly the great all-heal *is to be gathered from this Goſpel: were its directions univerſally or generally well underſtood, and embraced, and lived, the* new heavens and the new earth wherein dwelleth righteouſneſs, *a holy and a happy Church and State would be immediately preſent. Nations, Cities, Families, Souls, from the greateſt Prince to the meaneſt peaſant, would not only ſpeculatively, but feelingly know what true peace means. I am not now pleading for parties or great portions of this world. There has been ſuch ſcrambling and ſcuffling for theſe among Chriſtians by profeſſion, and under pretence too of anſwering to the obligations of the Goſpel, that the Goſpel it ſelf is almoſt loſt, or ſmother'd in the crowd; or which is as bad or worſe, 'tis charged with being the great peace-breaker, and cauſer of all the miſchiefs. Some men think themſelves wiſe enough to be happy in their* own *methods in the Church it ſelf, were not the Goſpel ſuch an intermedler. The Goſpel that teaches ſo much ſelf-denial, that makes Jeſus Chriſt in the form*

of

of a ſervant to be ſo perfect a pattern, eſpecially for Miniſters of the Goſpel ; *that allows no compulſions but a Conſcience well informed, and a ſpirit made willing by its Convictions, and the ſenſible apprehenſions of* God, *and the great after-reckoning to the Divine Majeſty. The Goſpel, that obliges obedience to Princes out of Conſcience to* God, *whoſe Repreſentatives they are, reverence to their Perſons, prayers and praiſes to* God *for their proſperity ; Honour to whom honour, fear to whom fear, tribute to whom tribute, as moſt equal and due ; love benignity, affableneſs and peaceableneſs to, and with all men.*

I have therefore as a kind of Appendix to this Treatiſe of the Goſpel of Peace, *annexed a ſhort one* of the Government of our own ſpirits, *without which all ſpeculations will come ſhort of uſe and practice. I know not what may be the acceptance or ſucceſs of either, I leave them to his bleſſing, to the ſervice of whoſe glory I can ſay by the* Grace *of* God, *they are deſigned. Some perſons perhaps may eſteem the whole impertinent, and the ſtile canting, and void of that maſculine ſenſe which is peculiar to one ſort of men ; but ſo much above the principles and genius of diſſenters from them, eſpecially thoſe of*

the

the lower form, that if they ſhould chance to read or hear ſomewhat of theirs that looks that way, they will hardly believe their own eyes or ears. But let them judg of me, or ſuch as I and theſe poor Papers, as they pleaſe, I ſhall own and bleſs God for any thing of theirs that is worthy. And if I may but be a means to ſerve in any degree the intereſt of Chriſt, and ſouls, I hope I have counted the Coſts, and ſhall not repent my undertaking, except the many ſinful infirmities that have attended its manage, by an unworthy Servant in the Miniſtry of the Goſpel,

July 23. 1687. JOHN FALDO.

ERRATA.

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THE

THE GOSPEL OF PEACE, &c.

EPHES. VI. 15.

Having your feet ſhod with the preparation of the Goſpel of Peace.

CHAP. I.

SECT. I.

WE have in theſe words one part or piece of that Armour, with its uſe, which the Apoſtle exhorts the *Epheſian* Chriſtians, and with them all that engage in the Chriſtian Spiritual Warfare, to put on. But that we may the better underſtand the ſenſe and

Ephes. 6. 10. scope of the Text, we must look back to *verse* 10. Here the Apostle begins that Paragraph wherewith he shuts up, and concludes this Epistle; *Finally, brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might.* A necessary advice: And indeed such an one, without a conformity to which, there can be no engaging successfully and comfortably in our Christian duty.

Verse 11. Verse 11. *Put on the whole armour of God,* is an advice which gives the true exposition of being *strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might,* according to the sense of *verse* 10. It is not only to have our dependance on the immediate Divine Grace and Assistance; but also in the due use of all that Spiritual Armature he hath provided for us, to fortify us to, and in our duty, against all dangers that threaten us in it, or allurements that tempt us to depart from it.

This Armour is called the *power of his might,* First, As it is a power of Gods creating and ordination, and which he hath provided and bestowed on us as his Auxiliaries, his helps and assistances, for our encouragement and ability to do our duty, and our security in it.

2*dly*, As this Armour put on, and in its due exercise hath an energy and efficacy to its designed ends, above and beyond all humane or natural causality, agreeable to a Divine and Supernatural Power. *For tho we walk after the flesh, we do not war after the flesh: for the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty,* &c. Material fleshly things are weak: *Their horses are flesh, and not spirit.* And tho this Armour is not *spirit*, it is *spiritual*, and partakes of the *power* of Spirits; yea, of the God of Spirits.

2 Cor. 10. 3, 4.

Isa. 31. 3.

3*dly*, As

3*dly*, As there is a Divine Power annexed to every piece of this Armour in its *due* use, it is *mighty through God*: 'tis animated by *his* Spirit. So the Gospel is said to be the *power of God to salvation, to every one that believeth. The preaching of the cross to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved, the power of God.* Rom. 1. 18. 1 Cor. 1. 18.

This Armour will not be found Armour of proof, if not *animated* by a power above it self, or him that wears it. Indeed God hath promised the concourse of his Divine Power, where 'tis diligently improved: but still its *efficacy* lies not in it self, or our improvements, but the Divine Power *annexed* to, and acting by it. The Holy Apostle *Paul*'s Grace was not, but God's Grace assisting, *his* was *sufficient* for him.

Thus much is not only expedient to be said, in the consideration of *verse* 10. but necessary; because it concerns, and affects the whole of that Armature whereof our Text is a part; and puts upon it that countenance which is its chief beauty, strength and glory.

This Armour of God, which is the power of *his* might, is *compleat* Armour; not only with respect to its *efficacy*, but also in regard of its *parts*: there is some or other piece of this Armour for *every* part; according to the Apostles Military allusion to the body of a Soldier, armed at all points for offence and defence, Cap-a-pe: no part *wanting*, no part to be *neglected*, but taken to us, and put on: And indeed any one part unarmed, is sufficient to expose us to wounds and death. Therefore we are exhorted to put on the *whole* Armour of God: πᾶσαν πανοπλίαν, *armaturam integram*; which implies 2 Cor. 12. 9.

not only all its parts, but so united and *compacted*, as may render it (tho of divers parts, yet) one whole and well compacted Armour, leaving no space so much as between the *joynts* of the Harness, for an Arrow, or a fiery Dart to *enter*. In *this Ahab*'s Armour was defective, and it cost him his *life*.

But here let me observe by the way, that tho there be Armour even for the *feet* in this Divine furniture, yet there is not the least provision to fortify the *back*, which yet is common in *bodily* Armour. I can guess at no better ground for it than this, That runaways and backsliders are so far out of *God*'s protection, as to be left to smart for their *Cowardice*. He would have all to *stand* and keep their ground: 'tis to that purpose, this excellent Armour is pro-
Eph. 6.14. vided for them. *Stand therefore, having*, &c.

Having said what I judged meet of the Christians spiritual Armour in general; I shall now consider that *particular* piece in my Text, *appropriated* to the *feet*. *Having your feet shod with the preparation of the Gospel of peace.* The Christian life is in Scripture often represented by a *walk*, a *journey*: But as 'tis a spiritual *warfare*, its motions may well be rendred a spiritual *March*, under the Command and Banner of our Lord Jesus, the Captain of our Salvation.

In common motions and travels, the *feet* are exposed to many calamities and sufferings; more especially to wounds and bruises, by length of journies; stony, thorny, rugged and uneven ways. It was a *special* evidence of God's care and Provi-
Deut. 8. 4. dence over *Israel* in their journyings in the Wilder-
Deut. 29. 5. ness, that their Shooes did not wax *old* on their feet,

nei-

neither did their feet *swell* in all the forty years they continued there. Here the Lord eked out their short store, and made there Leather wear like Iron; corrected natural infirmity, and made their tender feet travel-proof: that it might appear that God sometimes will make *his* ways free from pain, or penury, to those who ingage in them in sincerity, and trust in him. But in our spiritual motions, he has great variety of methods to preserve us from snares and mischiefs. That Promise made, and more *particularly* applied to our Lord Jesus, reaches all his followers: *For he shall give his Angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways; and in their hands shall they bear thee up, lest thou dash thy foot against a stone.* Psal. 91. 11. It is prophesied of the promised Seed of the Woman, That the Serpent (meaning the Devil) should *bruise* his *heel*; which doth imply, that his progress in the way, and work of our redemption, should be attended with *sore* temptations and sufferings. Gen 3.15. And it is not without some intimation, that his Disciples and followers in the way of their duty, should meet with the same *hard* measures from Satan and his instruments: the proof of which hath fill'd up the Volumes of all the Ages of Christianity.

These considerations might tempt such, whose hearts are engaged to enter into, and walk in the holy ways of the Lord, to *hesitate* at the *prospect* of these unpleasing encounters: at least to take their steps *fearfully* and *staggeringly*, without that holy *boldness*, resolution, uprightness, thorowness, and *assured* Countenance as becomes the Servants of the *Lord*, the followers of the *Lamb*, and those who, in the obedience of *Faith*, press toward the *mark*,

the prize *of our high calling of God in Christ Jesus.*

But our Text furnishes us against *all fears* of what we may meet with in our Christian Course, with Armour for our *feet*, Armour of God's *own* hammering, and of Divine appointment for our security: which if we put *on*, all fears and griefs will *fall off* of themselves: and our temptations and adversities will no more *pierce* and wound, than the Swords and Bullets that aim at that Body which is *inclosed* in Armour of *proof*. We may hold on our *way* thorow thick and thin, and tread on the *sharpest* stones with as much delight and security, as on the *smoothest* pavement strew'd with *Roses*.

Ἑτοιμασία, a mind fitted, disposed.

The next thing we have to consider in the Text, is the Armour it self, wherewith the Feet ought to be shod: and that is, *The preparation of the Gospel of peace.*

The Gospel of *Peace* is such Furniture, as is *sufficient* to prepare us to, and fit us for our Christian wayfare, and warfare: No *wise* man will undertake either of these, but he will first be *prepared* with what is meet to carry him thorow (if possible) both safely and comfortably.

Such an accomplishment is the Gospel of Peace to those who are *shod* with it. They are *aforehand* with whatever may happen: have *prevented* all dangers or disapointments. And 'tis call'd a *preparation*, because till we are furnished with it, we are no way fit for the profession and *life* of Christianity: But when this is put on, we are ready prepared to duty, and all that attends it.

All that remains for the opening the Text is, to shew what this Gospel of Peace is, that is such a necessary and blessed preparation.

The

The Gospel, in the *Greek*, Ευαγγέλιον, signifies *glad* tidings, answerable to that enunciation of the coming of the Son of God in the flesh. *Behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people.* Luk. 2.10. And it agrees most exactly, and in the highest sense, with the true design and nature of the Gospel: For the Gospel contains, declares, and tenders the *medicinal remedying* Law and Covenant of Grace: The cure of that sin and misery derived from the *fall*, the methods of Divine wisdom in the prosecuting the gracious end of reconciliation between God and sinful undone Man: than which, what can be more welcome to a rational creature, sensible of his misery, and desirous of a Recovery?

The old *English Saxon* expressed the *Gospel* by two words, *viz. Gots-spel* or *Gods-spel*: the Genuine import of which, was Gods cure or remedy. But we are not to restrain the Sense of this term *Gospel*, to the mere *Priviledges* of the Covenant of Grace, in which Sinners become interested by *sincere* Evangelical and saving Faith: but to extend it to all its Precepts, Doctrines, Advices: yea, to its warnings and *menaces*, all which in the due use of them, have *some* share in this *Preparation* of the Gospel of Peace.

Three Doctrines or Propositions will take in the Sense of the Text: all which I purpose (if the Lord will) to consider, according to the interest they have in the Text, and the share they (seem to me to) contribute to our Edification in the Grace and *Peace* of the Gospel.

CHAP. II.

Doct. 1*st*, *The Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ, is a Gospel of Peace.*

Doct. 2*d*, *That there is in the Gospel of Peace, furniture sufficient to preserve our Peace against all Encounters in our Christian course.*

Doct. 3*d*, *In order to the securing our Peace, by the Preparations and Furniture of the Gospel, we ought to make a due use and application of it.*

I Shall consider these three Doctrines in their order.

1*st*, *That the Gospel of our Lord Jesus, is a Gospel of Peace.*

Peace is a quality belongs to it, not only as some *lesser* Circumstance or small *Appendage*: but as its principal Subject runs in all its Veins: 'tis the very Spirit and Soul of it. Some Men impose *Titles* on their Books, that have but little concern in the Books *themselves*. This is not their *Wisdom*, but their *Vanity*, and the Readers *utter* disappointment. The only wise and faithful God cannot be liable to such an Incongruity: He calls things by their right Names. He doth not draw a *great* shooe upon a *little* foot. We have abundant testimony of this truth in the Scripture. I shall instance in two only.

When

When Christ sent forth his Disciples to Preach the Gospel, he orders them to signifie its Errand in their *Salutation: Peace be unto this House.* But more expresly in the words of St. *Peter*, *Preaching Peace by Jesus Christ.* Peace is its Errand and Argument. Luke 10. 5. Acts 10. 36.

Seven things I shall endeavour in the Explication of this Doctrine.

1*st*, To give a short, but sufficient account of the Nature of *Peace* in *General.*

2*dly*, Shew you upon what Considerations the Gospel is a Gospel of Peace.

3*dly*, To whom, or what this Peace concerns, and hath respect unto.

4*thly*, What is the Nature and excellent Properties of it.

5*thly*, On what Foundations it is laid.

6*thly*, In what methods it is derived to us.

7*thly*, Answer a great Objection against, and Reflection upon this Doctrine, from the sad *Expeperience* of the unpeaceable Condition of the World, where, and when the Gospel hath set footing, and in the Spirits and deportments of its Professors.

SECT. II.

What the Nature of Peace is in General.

1*st*, It is *Negative*, excluding all those evils that are Adversaries to our Tranquility, to our true and real Happiness.

It

It is as impoſſibe for Fire and Water to be *quiet*, when mingled together, or the Waters to be *calm*, when beaten on by fierce and impetuous Storms: as for a Man to be at *Peace* while under the Power and *Impreſſions* of what is contrary to him. And this is none of the leaſt of its *Excellencies*, that where it is, all things contrary to us are either *abſent*: or we are ſo fortifi'd, that they cannot hurt or diſtreſs us. Motion or Agitation (ſimply conſidered) is no Breach of our Peace: but Contrariety and Contradiction, this is *War*, the true *Breach* of the Peace, where we have not a *Defence* ſufficient to ſecure us.

The Apoſtle *Paul* had Adverſaries and Adverſities attended him whereever he came: but tho he could not *fly* them, he did *eſcape* them: *None of theſe things move me.* He was ſteady as a Rock againſt the Waves: calm as thoſe Heavens which no Vapour can reach.

Acts. 20. 24.

2*dly*, It is *Poſitive*, as including all that good that is neceſſary to our *Salvation.*

A Negative Peace alone, is a very bare and *beggerly* thing. Not to be ſick, in pain, any way contradicted, afflicted, or unhappy: This is the peace of a Stock, or a Stone: *not* that of a ſenſible and rational being: of all created beings, the *intelligent*, as they are moſt *capable*, ſo they are moſt *craving.*

How unhappy a thing is it to *hunger and thirſt*, and have nothing to anſwer and ſatisfie thoſe *vehement* Appetites? Man is a *large* Veſſel, if he be not fill'd with what is *Connatural*, agreeable to him, ſomewhat unfriendly, *unkind* and injurious, muſt fill up the Room. A Veſſel not fill'd with more

more *solid* Matter, will entertain *mere* Air, rather than *any* Emptiness.

A mere negative peace is a *dead* peace. The *Hebrew* salutation, *Peace be with you*, intended *all* good things, whatever might contribute to their joys. Life and Peace *morally* considered, are but the *same* things: And the Apostle couples them as *pares* of like import. *To be spiritually minded is life and peace:* They are exegetical or interpretative each of other. It is observable what is said of *Nabal*, in the direction of *David*'s Message to him. *Say to him that liveth in prosperity*, so *our* Translation: But in the original 'tis only, Say to him that *liveth:* for no man liveth that liveth not comfortably: and also no man has true solid peace, but he that injoys himself, by injoying what is necessary to his satisfaction. Rom. 8. 6.

3*dly*, Peace is an aquiescence in the true matter or means of satisfaction which we possess, or may possess.

Heaven it self would not be sufficient to create a Peace for that man who cannot aquiesce in its felicity. The fallen Angels, and our first Parents, had enough in those stations wherein God had placed them, to fill their capacity, to answer the *utmost* of their affections: and whilest they *aquiesced* therein, they had perfect peace. But when once their desires shot themselves beyond *those* bounds, their conditions grew *uneasie*, their Peace was broken. That expression of the *Psalmist*, *He maketh me to lie down in green pastures*, is a compleat representation of *Peace:* A sufficiency, plenty enough to answer necessity, and kindle a delight: and this acquiesced in, the Soul taking up its rest, the *heart*, and Psal. 23. 2.

and ſo *adequate* proviſion brought together.

What is the cauſe that all men that hear the Goſpel of Peace, are not immediately changed into its *image:* I mean their Souls bleſſed with its Peace? It muſt be either from their disbelief of the real *exiſtence* of thoſe good things propoſed there, or at leaſt their ſuſpicion that they are not attainable by them; or which is the moſt prevailing, that their hearts cannot, or do not aquieſce in, and embrace them as a *ſufficiency*, an adequate good: And this is the true cauſe of the impoſſibility of the peace of that man, whoſe Principles, or Affections, and Will, are under the prevalency of corrupted nature.

Pſal. 17. 15. *As for me* (ſaith the Wiſe and Holy *David*) *I will behold thy face in righteouſneſs: I ſhall be ſatisfied when I awake with thy likeneſs.* Righteouſneſs is not only a condition of happineſs, as anſwering the *terms* of the law of Grace, but alſo a neceſſary *preparation* to it. And that *likeneſs* of God, which is a congruity of the glorified creature to all the Divine perfections, renders it capable of ſatisfaction in that God, between whom and ſuch a Soul there is ſo exact and compleat an *agreement*.

SECT. III.

Upon what Conſiderations the Goſpel is call'd the Goſpel of Peace.

1*ſt*. The principal deſign of God, in and by the Goſpel, is Peace: Next and ſubordinate to his *own* Glory, *Peace* is the *mark* which his Eternal Thoughts and Councels aimed at by the whole frame of the Goſpel.

Gospel. *Glory to God in the highest*, takes the first place, next to that *peace on earth*, and lastly, *good will towards men:* of which, this Peace is the highest evidence and expression. In Christ's state of humiliation, *The chastisment of our* peace *was upon him.* Isa. 53. 5. In his state of *exaltation* he is said to be (according to the *type*) *Melchisedech king of Salem:* That is, Heb. 7. 1. King of Righteousness, King of Peace. So that, take him at lowest or highest, Suffering, Obeying, Reigning, the *design* of all is *peace.*

2*dly*, The *tendency* of the Gospel to Peace.

There is the highest and most *accomplished* tendency to Peace in the Gospel: The means answers the *end*, suitable to that good will and wisdom that is *peculiar* to the Divine Being. No natural cause hath a more exact tendency to its proper effects. All its Promises, Provisions, Precepts, Cautions, Convictions, Instructions: yea, its very Chidings, Menaces, and *Chastisements*, conspire to carry on this blessed end of *peace.*

3*dly*, Its Proposals, and Tenders, and Treaties, are Peace.

Peace is the Pearl it offers: The great business its Ministers and Ambassadors are to treat of: And they are unworthy of the *name* of Ministers of the Gospel, who so far forget its errand and their *own*, as to neglect the blessed work of *Peace-makers:* But of all others, they who contradict it *so far*, as instead of tendering and treating *God*'s Peace, vent their own *Passions* to serve their own Parties, Factions, and Carnal Interests.

The hypocritical *Jews mocked* God, and abused his Ordinance of *fasting*, by fasting for strife and debate: and were severely reproved for their pains,

by

by him they pretended to worship, serve, and reconcile. *Behold, ye fast for* strife and debate, *to smite with the fist of* wickedness: *Ye shall* not *fast as ye do* this day. *Is not this the fast that I have chosen:* to loose *the bands of* wickedness, *to* undo *the heavy burdens, and to let the* oppressed go free, *and that ye* break *every yoak?* Read but Preaching instead of Fasting: 'tis all as congruous to *truth*, and as obvious to *human* reason. Pardon this digression (if it be such) it being to meet with those who are *so much* out of their *way*.

Isa. 58. 4, 5, 6.

See the tenders of the Gospel, and the business of its Ministers. *And into whatever house ye enter, say* Peace *be to this house:* But if this tender of peace be rejected, the Ambassadors of Peace are call'd off, and must leave nothing behind them but the witnesses of their *ingratitude*, and the menaces of the most severe revenge from the God of Peace.

Luke 10. 5.

Verse 10. 11.

4*thly*, The Gospel *Commands* and wooes Peace, and directs us into the *way* of it. The Lord doth not by his Gospel commend it to us, and leave it there, but he *commands* it also: Thereby making it our *sin* as well as our *folly* to reject or sleight it: An affront to the Divine Majesty, as well as a wrong to our selves and others. *Be diligent that ye may be found of him in peace.*

2 Pet. 3. 14.

The Gospel passes from Commands to Intreaties. *Now then we are Ambassadors for Christ, as tho' God did beseech you by us. We pray you in Christs stead be ye reconciled to God.* If our hearts be inclined to Peace, but we are ignorant of the way of it, the Gospel becomes our director, *To guide our feet into the way of peace.*

5*thly*, Its

5*thly*, Its Effects and Fruits are Peace.

They are actually so with some or other, as froward and perverse as the World is to Peace, to whom the Gospel of Peace makes its addresses. None of God's designs are barren and vain. And if his Will and Design be to promote Peace by the Gospel, and especially Peace with God: it shall have these effects somewhere: God has told us *afore-hand* it shall be so, tho' he has not told us the persons by *name*. *The unbelief of the body of the Jews* (the Apostle saith) *shall not make the faith of God of none effect.* God had designed, declared, promised an *Efficacy of Peace* to the Gospel of Peace; Who, or what can resist his good Will, the purposes of his Grace? Rom. 3.3.

Consider the Promises made to the Son of God, upon his undertaking the gracious work of *reconciliation: And he said, It is a light thing that thou shouldest be my servant, to raise up the tribes of Jacob, and to restore the preserved of Israel: I will also give thee for a light to the Gentiles, that thou mayest be my salvation to the ends of the earth. When thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, He shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in his hand.* We may take that Prophesie of Christ, for the *Exposition* of this concerning him: *And I, when I am lift up will draw all men to me:* i. e. by *reconciliation*, by my Gospel of Peace. What can we think of those promises of writing God's Law in the *mind?* giving a heart of *flesh?* The sense of which is, their being *reconciled* to God; but that some, and many shall be wrought on, savingly to perform the terms of life in the Covenant of Grace. No one person, or sort of Isa. 53.10. Joh. 12.32. Isa. 55.10, 11.

per-

persons, however qualified, can be here pointed out, but are all hid in the *Arcana* of God's purpose; 'tis effectual calling must speak them particularly to belong to the election of Grace.

This certain infallible *efficacy* that was certain and *future*, before it had any actual being, methinks is hard to be reconciled to that opinion, that leaves all reconciling saving successes of the Gospel of Peace, to *uncertain Contingencies*; which is to say, it might, or was most likely to be savingly effectual: But it was possible it might so come to pass, that not one Soul might be reconciled by it. It was so left to the Liberty and Power of Man, that he had the turning of the Scale.

The last Consideration I offer, upon which it is, or may very *congruously* be called the Gospel of Peace, is, That it is the only *revealed* way of Peace.

I am neither so adventurous or *uncharitable*, as to utter any Sentence against the more *honest* Heathen, who lived up to their light, which God hath *not* denounced in the Patent writings of his Word. But, that *there is no other name given under Heaven among men, but the name of Jesus Christ, whereby we must be saved*, is the express Text. So much for the Considerations upon which it may be said to be the Gospel of Peace. 'Tis not an *empty* title, but has in it what abundantly answers to *this* Character.

Acts 4.12.

CHAP.

CHAP. III.

SECT. I.

Who, or what the Peace of the Gospel hath respect unto.

I Shall determine this, First Negatively. Secondly Positively.

Negatively first,

It hath not any design for the Peace of the *Holy* Angels, who have kept their *first* habitation.

The God of Peace hath found them always where, and what they ought to be: In that order and decorum wherein he first placed them. They never sinned, and therefore never brake their *Peace* with God, nor among themselves: And therefore need no Gospel, nor other means to *reconcile* them.

The Scripture tells us, that they desire to *look* into the things contained in the Gospel: But this *desire* is, to behold the glory of the Divine attributes shining forth in Grace, riches of Grace to sinners among men: Such Grace as hath an height, and depth in it; beyond the prospect and reach of Angels, without the help of Divine Revelation. 1 Pet. 1. 12.

2*dly*, It is not a Gospel of Peace that hath any design to reconcile the Devils, or *faln* Angels: These *are reserved in everlasting Chains, under darkness, to the judgment of the great day.* 'Tis a double chain Jude v. 6.

under which they are held; a chain of guilt, and the chain of God's *decree*, which neither men nor Angels can *break*.

It hath been put as a question, Why God should shew so much Grace and Favour to faln Man, and none at all to the faln Angels? Why the Son of God *took on him, not the nature of Angels, but the seed of* Abraham? Seeing they were creatures who, by *nature* were so much *superiour* to man in all excellencies; in substance *spirits*, but Man a poor lump of *clay*, quickened by a *Soul*, but one step above the *brutes*: In strength so much superiour, as a Man is to a Worm, and more: In knowledg and sagacity, as admits not the wisest of men to any *comparison*: In duration *immortal*, whereas man begins to dye as soon as he begins to live: In their habitation, dwellers in the Heaven of Heavens, Courtiers and immediate attendants on the Holy and Divine Majesty; whereas man hath his foundation in the *dust*, dwells in a habitation of *clay*, is a poor creeping worm on God's *foot-stool*.

It is commonly answered, that God dealt *more* severely with them than with man, because their sin was of a *deeper* stain, more exceeding sinful.

1*st*. As they were placed in an higher station, and their fall was accordingly greater.

2*dly*, They had greater *ability* to stand, whereas man had but a *bare* sufficiency.

3*dly*, They had more immediate knowledg of God; and a more compleat and intimate injoyment of him.

4*thly*, That only some *part* of their number fell: Heaven was not left totally empty of *their species*: Whereas man fell one and all, *all had sinned, and*

come

come short of the glory of God. If a means of reconciliation and recovery had not been found out for *man*, one *intire* Tribe of *intelligent* creatures would have been missing in Heaven for ever, there being but two in all; Angels, and men. But I will rather take my Answer out of Christ's mouth, in a Case not altogether unlike this, *I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes: even so father, for so it seemed good in thy sight.* Here was a regard to the *less* excellent and *capable*, before their betters in both those points; the only reason being the free and soveraign pleasure of God. Matt. 11. 25, 26.

That man who dare affront the Will of God with the Law of his own reasonings, and oppose plain Scripture words and sense with his rules of equity; Let him consider this Divine practical Comment on those words, *I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion.* The Lord by a hand of love and pity, takes hold of sorry faln Man, and leaves the faln Angels where their sin had cast them. Surely here is election and *preterition*; and both depending *purely* on Divine Pleasure. Rom 9. 15.

Let men take heed, that under pretence of *magnifying* the goodness of God, by extending it beyond the *Gospel* line, that they do not divest him of his *soveraignty*, and more than *question* his truth. *Job*'s Friends were *good* men, and pretended to plead *God*'s Cause with admirable oratory, and flourish against *Job*, as if it became not God, was *incompatible* with his justice to deal so *severely* with *Job*, if he were not a *rank* hypocrite: But *Job* un-

der all his *pressures*, asserts God's *soveraignty*, and justifies his own integrity. God himself determines the Controversie on *Job*'s side, *viz.* That his friends had not spoken right of God as his servant *Job*. He pardons *Job*'s friends, but *Job* must deal in the atonement.

SECT. II.

To answer positively, first, The Peace the Gospel is concerned in, is a Peace or Reconciliation of the Divine Attributes, in reference to fallen man's happiness.

Not that they were ever at any jar among *themselves:* But the Case of fallen Man was such, That upon the supposal of God's design of Grace and Mercy to him, his justice and faithfulness must needs demurr to it; till some mean was offered for their satisfaction and security. Fallen sinful Man lay a Sacrifice at the foot of Divine *vindictive* justice; Man's sin *expos'd* him to death as a *penalty*, not only by the Law of *nature*, but by the sentence *expressly* pass'd against him by God himself, in case
Gen. 2.17. he should eat of the Tree of the knowledg of good and evil. Man ventures on the trangression of that inhibition; God is bound by his *word* to exact the penalty. It was past the reach of the wisdom of Man or Angel to reconcile God's Mercy (if he were disposed to exert it) to his Justice and Truth. Man must perish to satisfie the justice, veracity, and honour of God, which he had affronted: or God must put up the wrong, as far as to a denial of himself. Here was a sad *dilemma*, a difficult *knot:* But the Gospel declares how the knot was *untied.*

That

That Divine Wisdom and Love by the mutual consent of God the Father, and God the Son, had *transferred* the punishment of Man's sin upon the Son of God; for which end in due time he was made *man*, took on him *the seed of* Abraham, *was wounded for our transgressions, bruised for* our *iniquities. The chastisement of our* peace *was upon him, With* his *stripes* Isa. 53. 5. we *are healed. God laid on him the iniquities of us all.*

Hereby the way lay open for Mercy and Truth to *meet* together; Righteousness and *Peace* to kiss each other. Mercy to *Man*, to agree with Divine Truth; *Peace* with Man, to kiss and embrace *Righteousness* in God. Hereby God was at a just and honourable *liberty*, yea, under a just and merciful *obligation*; to erect a new Covenant, a Covenant of *Grace*; more easie and secure *terms* of life and happiness. *For what the Law could not do, in that it* Rom. 8. 3. *was weak through the flesh: God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin condemned sin in the flesh, that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the spirit.*

This reconciliation of the Divine Attributes, and the methods of it, in rendring Man *salvable*, notwithstanding the *impossibility* of his being so, by the severe, and *strict* execution of the first Law, or Covenant, is declared to us by the *Gospel*: without which we could have had no *such* satisfaction to build our Faith on as the gracious Promise of God. Whereas by these methods *revealed* in the Gospel, the Grace contained therein appears more *rational*, and many great *objections* removed out of the way of our Faith.

2*dly*, The Peace of the Gospel, is a Peace between God and *sinful* Man: There was, and is a dreadful quarrel between God, and every Man that is under the guilt and power of sin. Man's sin broke the Peace, and sin uncured increases the breach, and makes its wounds wider: But notwithstanding all Man's guilt and misery, there is a remedy in the Gospel: Peace for sinful, miserable, impotent Man, with the Almighty and *provoked* God.

Acts 10. 36. 2 Cor. 5. 18, 19. The great Doctrine of the Gospel is, *Peace with God through Jesus Christ: preaching peace by Jesus Christ. And hath committed to us the word of reconciliation; to wit, That God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself.* This is the substance and grand design of the Gospel, to make peace between *God and Man.* Other designs of Peace it has, and declares; but this carries the preference: All the rest are either in order to it, or consequent of it.

The Name of Christ Jesus is only to be found in the Gospel.

1*st*. Not only Peace with God, is the Peace designed by it; but also the only way and means is declared by it: for if the *Gospel be hid, it is hid to* 2 Cor. 4. 3. *those that are lost.* All the wit and prospect of Men, or Angels, could reach no prospect of this *Peace with God*, till *Life and immortality was brought to light through the Gospel.*

God cannot look on sinners peaceably, without *anger*; nor sinners on God without *terrour*; 'tis the light of the Gospel discovers the face of God, shining in the face of Jesus Christ. Till we behold the face of God reconciled by the Gospel, *Mercy and Truth met together, and Righteousness*

teousness and Peace kissing each other, We cannot see his face and live.

2*dly*, The Gospel declares the *terms* and conditions of this Peace with God on *our* part: Faith and Repentance; The obedience of Faith, The new birth; Being made new creatures; Resigning our selves *sincerely* and universally to the will of God; accepting and embracing the *whole* Covenant; and living *congruously* to a Christian profession.

3*dly*, It tenders this Peace with God to *all*, and adds the compulsion of the highest and strongest *motives* that man is capable of; The promise of the life that *now* is, and that which is to *come*.

4*thly*, It does not only wooe, but *work* by a Divine, secret efficiency to a sense of, and *compliance* with this Peace with God upon Gospel terms. *It is the power of God to salvation to every one that believeth.* Rom. 1. 16.

SECT. III.

3*dly*, *A Gospel of Peace with a man's own Conscience.*

Conscience, yea, *natural* Conscience can discern and reflect on the wound, the breach made by sin betwixt a sinner and his God: Tho of it *self*, it can neither work, nor *discern* the cure.

Our first Parents fled from the presence of God at the fright which *Conscience* raised in their Souls. Gen. 3. 8, 10, 11.

I was afraid, because I was naked. They knew they were naked, exposed to *God*'s displeasure and their *own* shame. But, *Who told thee that thou wert naked?* No other but his *own* Conscience told him so; And the same Conscience that told him he was

naked, remembred him of the *Law* he had transgressed, the *penalty* of death incurred thereby, the *loss* of Divine favour, his being exposed to intollerable and inevitable *vengeance*. The same Conscience made such application of these direful considerations, that as he fled from the presence of the offended God, so he would gladly have fled from himself and from his Conscience also, that bound him; his sin, and his punishment together: From his Conscience that was become his Enemy; and fought against him in God's stead, and with God's Weapons.

Gen. 4. 13, 14. Thus it was between *Cain* and his Conscience. When God had passed his sentence on him for his fratricide, his Conscience makes the poyson and smart of it stick to his bones; *My punishment is greater than I can bear.* He turns Vagabond, but could not flee from his Conscience. His Conscience frights him with the terrors of death, to be executed by the next hand that meets him. *Whoever meets me shall slay me.*

An accusing and condemning Conscience, is sin open before hand, and haleing the Soul to judgment: An antidated Hell. It lies at the *door*, at the catch to *Arrest* the guilty Soul. O what would not a man give for Peace with Conscience, who hath felt its stings, and carried its Hell in his bosom wherever he goes, wherever he is, in his down-lying, his up-rising, his worship, his reading, his meditations, his table, his cups, yea in his very dreams?

This blessed Gospel is a Gospel of Peace betwixt a sinner and his terrible *intimate* enemy, an *awakened* Conscience. And this naturally follows

peace

peace with God. Where peace with God is by the word and Spirit of God proclaimed in the ſinners ſoul, with *convincing* evidence: Conſcience, which is Gods inſtrument, lays down its weapons, becomes our friend, and treats us as the friends and confederates of God.

When God ſpeaks peace by his Goſpel, Conſcience eccho's to its voice, and ſays ſo too.

This is the *anſwer of a good Conſcience* to Gods voice and our inquiries. That man who embraces the Goſpel of peace, that *Goſpel* will *inſtruct* his Conſcience to ſpeak peaceably and kindly to him. 1 Pet. 3. 21.

The ſprinkling of the Blood of Jeſus which the Goſpel diſcovers and applies, will be the ſinners *Paſſover*. Where *that* is found on the *Door-poſts*, Conſcience has no power to ſmite with death.

The believing converted ſinner, will be no more frighted from the preſence of the Lord: But, can *draw nigh to him* (as the beſt of his Paradiſe) *with a true heart, in full aſſurance of faith; having his heart ſprinkled from an evil conſcience, and his body waſhed with pure water.*

And though it ſo falls out with ſome really Evangelized ſouls, that by the ſentence of the Goſpel they have peace with God, yet by the ſentence of Conſcience 'tis directly *contrary*. This does not ariſe from any *defect* in the Goſpel, but of our own *miſunderſtanding the Goſpel*, or our own *hearts*. And Conſcience being an *human faculty*, can reflect no further than enlightened by the underſtanding: yea it goes along with *that*, tho into a groſs error.

But that Spirit of God which is the Spirit of the Goſpel, does ordinarily, and will (when 'tis

'tis congruous to divine wisdom) cause our spirits to joyn issue with *his* evidence of peace, where we are *truly* reconciled to God. *For, as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the Sons of God. For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear, but ye have received the spirit of Adoption, whereby we cry Abba Father. The Spirit it self beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the Children of God.*

Rom. 8. 14,15,16.

I might add, that the Gospel assists to peace of Conscience, as it directs and moves to that frame of heart and life, as preserves our peace with Conscience. For besides our peace with Conscience as to our state for eternity, and general reconciliation with God, we are concern'd to preserve it with respect to particular actions, and the whole frame of our life. Tho Conscience enlightned will not charge a man as a damned sinner for every careless, or wilful failing, and throw hell in his face; yet, it will charge him as a sinner, and it may be as guilty of deeply aggravated sin; such sin as God will not only hide his face for, but frown, threaten, and execute severe displeasure. Now he that according to the Rules of the Gospel, *sincerely* exercises *himself to have a conscience void of offence towards God, and towards men*, shall maintain such a peace with conscience that he shall not be so much as accused, threatned, or chid by it; yea, it will be an excusing, comforting, and justifying Conscience. *For our rejoicing is this, the testimony of our conscience, &c. that in simplicity and godly sincerity——we have had our conversation in the world.*

Acts. 24. 16.

2 Cor. 1. 12.

Fourthly, *A stated inward peace universally considered:* It is such a peace the Gospel derives to us when

when sincerely embraced, as makes all calm within, *exclusive* of perturbation from any cause, or consideration whatsoever. There are other arrows that sometimes stick in the soul, besides those that flie from the quiver of an irreconciled God, or an awakened, troubled, and disquieting Conscience. As losses and crosses in the world, fears of foes, desolations, wants of necessary relief, frowns of men, and others innumerable. Such as these (without the former) may pave all our paths with thorns and briers; stuff our pillows with anxious and perplexing thoughts and cares.

But the Gospel of Peace embraced, and applied in its directions, promises and comforts, will maintain an inward peace and tranquility against all their assaults. *I will lay me down in peace and sleep, for thou Lord only makest me to dwell in safety.* Psal. 4. 8. That Princely Saint (whose words these were) had many adversaries and adversities to disrest him, and break his peace; but the consideration of the shines of divine favour, and the shadow of Gods protection (which the Gospel only could discover to him) could sufficiently secure him in the midst of his dangers from all disturbing cares or fears; he could sleep *in utramque aurem* on both ears.

And well may he be at peace who has God for his stay against all storms; and as such, he is no where represented but in the Gospel-promise; that promise is a branch of the Gospel-Covenant, *Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on thee.* Isa. 26. 3. To have a God all-sufficient, such a God in Covenant to stay upon, is sure enough to keep the mind

mind steady. But suppose the mind be feeble, and wavering in this act of reliance; here is that which makes sure work for our peace, who trust in him, tho so defectively. God has promised to do the work himself, if our *faith* can't do it, *he* will do it. *Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace.* The God of peace himself, he that commands *peace* in *his high places.* He that creates peace, he will *keep him in perfect peace.* It is this peace of God, of Gods creating in the soul, of which the Apostle saith, *It shall keep your hearts and minds*; or as the *Greek*, *Shall garrison your hearts*, or secure them with a power able to give a good account of that peace it is are charged with.

Phil. 4.17. Φρυρήσει τας καρδίας.

SECT. IV.

The Gospel of Jesus Christ hath an efficacy to obtain, and maintain peace with men; and not only with good *men, but* bad *men; not only with* friends, *but* foes *also.*

1. It hath an efficacy by *special ties* and motives to maintain peace with, and among *good* men.

By good men, I mean here such as are good in a *Scripture*, that is a *sanctified* sense; or if you will, *good Christians.* For many go under that *name* of Christians, to no better end than the reproach of that *worthy* name; and are Christians but as an apple is an *apple* that is rotten at the *heart*, and it may be quite thorough within, and without too, 'tis an apple, notwithstanding but I never met with any yet that would call it a *good* apple.

I do

I do not ſay that the Goſpel hath *alway*, and with all *good* men this bleſſed effect. But there is that in it which if it were well *underſtood*, and lived in *good earneſt*, there would be no ſuch agreement, union, and peace as among ſincere Chriſtians. They would be the only perſons who would deſerve the title of the *Lovers band*.

That obſervation of the *Primitive* Chriſtians, by the old Heathen, would be revived, *See how they love one another*.

The means, motives, and inducements which the Goſpel effects, or *propoſes* to this end, among Chriſtians *indeed*, are innumerable and inexpreſſible. It informs them of thoſe real truths, that they are one *ſpiritual* body, yea, that they are one ſpirit: *He that is joyned to the Lord is one ſpirit*. That they are one *myſtical* Chriſt. Chriſt perſonal is the head, and all true believers are his members. They are all the Children of the ſame Father and Mother, God is their *Father*, and *Jeruſalem which is above is the mother of us all*. 1 Cor. 6. 16. Gal. 4. 26.

There is in every good Chriſtian an agreement in *nature*. The new creature is formed of the ſame holy, divine, *vital principles* in the *ſtrongeſt* man, and the weakeſt *babe*; tho not arrived to the ſame *meaſures* of perfection. There is by their *union* an holy ſympathy and *communion* with all the good and evil that concerns *any*, or *all* the members of this body: A circulation of the blood and ſpirits throughout the whole: *And whether one member ſuffer, all the members ſuffer with it; or one member be honoured, all the members rejoyce with it*. 1 Cor. 12. 16.

They have all the *ſame* heaven, the place of everlaſting reſt, which is the journeys end they

aim

aim at, and shall obtain. 'Tis for this self-same *Rest* they are now all *preparing*, and are dispositively prepared by the spirit of grace that abides, and lives in them. *For he that hath wrought us for the self-same thing is God, who hath also given unto us of his Spirit.* And as they have but one heaven, their journeys end; so they have but one way, the *obedience of faith*; tho with respect of different stations, conditions, circumstances, *understandings* also, they may not tread *just* in the same *track*.

2 Cor. 5. 5.

Our Lord Jesus in his blessed Gospel commands, and commends peace to his followers with the greatest *authority* and most Pathetical expressions. He leaves them *peace* as a legacy, and leaves as his last and dying command (when his love wrought *highest*, and his sufferings for them were within a few hours of their hottest) that they would do that in remembrance of him which is the Symbol of the most principal union and motives of love and peace one with another: I mean the holy Sacrament of the Lords-Supper. He promises the presence of the God of *love and peace* with them that live in peace; and threatens a *severe* revenge upon the breakers of the peace, that smite their fellow servants.

Mat. 24. 49.

The Laws which the Gospel lays on us of love, forbearance, bearing one anothers burdens, pitying and supporting one anothers infirmities; curing all we can, and covering what we cannot cure, does certainly render it a Gospel of peace for good men, one among and towards another. It teaches them to be so far above indifferent things, childish *toyes*, as to believe them below their contentions; but if such fancies *do* possess any, then to forbear

bear one another in love, and not deal judgings, and severe censures on the one hand, and contempts on the other, which the eminent and holy *Austin* elegantly resolves into these few words, *In necessariis unitas, in nonnecessariis libertas, in omnibus charitas.* In necessary things unity, in unnecessary things liberty, in all charity.

Indeed the Gospel represents Christians so disposed by grace, that if it be diligently improved and exerted, all that court and *complement*, that benign, obliging deportment, that civilizes and reconciles the world by art, will be found in Christians, as the genuine products of renewed nature. To conclude, these are the Gospel representations of Christian engagements and dispositions to peace among *themselves*, which if they were all drawn to the life upon its professors, the whole Christian world would be the *terra pacata*, Zion would be a peaceable habitation. All its *lively* stones would quietly lie in their order, in this Temple of God on *earth*. They would no more *disturb* each others peace, nor justle into anothers place. All would be one sweet *Consort*, contributing to the beauty, strength, and comfort of the whole building.

Consider what is spoken of those days, wherein the Gospel of peace shall prevail at another rate than now, and impress its image with more *vigour* on the Church. *So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth, it shall not return unto me void.* ——*it shall prosper whereto I sent it.* And what doth this efficacy of the Gospel particularly intend? *For you shall go out with joy, and be led forth with peace.* —— *Instead of the thorn shall come up the fir-tree,* Isa. 55.11, 12, 13.

fir-tree, and instead of the bryer shall come up the myrtle-tree. The same word we now are so *poorly* affected with, shall one day bring forth a richer crop of grace and peace. The ancient reproof confirms the truth I am affirming, *Either this is not the Gospel, or we are no Christians.* It was a degenerating age, tho (perhaps) not half so much as ours.

Aut hoc non est Evangelium, aut nos non sumus Evangelici.

Whatever men may pretend unto, for bearing the name of Christianity, they may measure their distance from the thing it *self*, or their approaches to it, much, by the *peaceableness* of their spirits, and deportment towards their brethren. Their souls who dwell far from dispositions to peace, have no *intimacy* with the Gospel. Let them who make earnings for their pleasure, or their profit, by smiting their fellow-servants, consider the Contents of *Mat.* 24. *ver.* 49. to the end of the *Chapt. But and if that evil servant shall say in his heart, My Lord delayeth his coming, and shall begin to smite his fellow servants, and to eat and drink with the drunken. The Lord of that servant shall come in a day when he looketh not for him, and in an hour that he is not ware of; and shall cut him asunder, and appoint him his portion with the hypocrites. There shall be weeping, and gnashing of teeth.* So far as this Text concerns *Ministers*, whom certainly it concerns as deeply as *any*; it aggravates their *cruelty* to their fellow-servants, by its being joyned with their own sensuality and luxury. And I need not use many words to perswade the present age, that those who have dealt such severe blows to good men, have ordinarily been very complaisant and fellowly with the worst, if not partaking with them in their follies.

Secondly,

Secondly, *The Gospel contributes very much to our peace with bad men.*

1. By prescribing, and disposing good men to a peaceable affection and carriage towards the *bad.*

The Gospel is no such narrow *strait-laced* thing, as to restrain a kind, benign, and courteous carriage to the *best*, or *better* sort of men. Bad men, yea notorious *hypocrites*, who are the *sink* of corrupted nature, are by *its rules* and principles, to partake of our civilities and charity. *Do good to all men, but especially to them who are of the houshold of faith.* Those who are best deserving, are to have the greatest share in our complacence and kindness; yet the worst of men not to be wholly abandoned, but their shreds of goodness to be *acknowledged*, and their necessities supplied from a sincere benevolence.

It obliges us to follow peace with *all men*, so far as not to part with holiness. Not only to accept peace when it *offers* it self, admit it when it *courts* us, but to pursue it when it *flees* from us. We must not part with peace with any man if it may be had, and preserved upon tollerable terms. This Heb.12.14 peaceable and benign spirit to evil men, the Gospel teaches us to be the *image* of God, that wherein consists a *principal* part of Godliness or God-likeness. *That ye may be the Children of your Father which is in heaven; for he maketh his Sun to rise on the evil, and the good; and his rain to fall on the just and the unjust.* These are the Gospel-lessons, which few of the Heathen understood; and the morose narrow-hearted *Jews* expunged with their *false* Glosses.

2*ly*, A compliance with the Gospel-directory, mightily conduces to procure and conciliate *peace* from evil men, to those who are good and holy.

Were the Lessons and Principles of the Gospel more *lively* represented by the conversations of its *professors*, it would in a great degree abate the hatred and *injuries* of the worst of men. Tho they have no principles of Grace, it would work on the remains of *good nature*. *These men* (said the *Amorites* of *Jacobs* Family) *are peaceable with us: therefore let*
Gen.34.21 *them dwell in the land, and trade with us.* And let it be supposed that the bad natures of unregenerate men has a *radicated* enmity to the godly as such; yet not only *humane* alliance, but common *interests* would engage to peace with such men who bear
1 Pet.3.13. the image of the Gospel. *Who will harm you, if ye be followers of that which is good?* None certainly that have any sparks of goodness *remaining* in them. None that have any regard to justice or *modesty*.

Thirdly, *The Gospel contributes to peace with enemies*. Men may be bad men, and yet in no *actual* enmity with the good and holy. But suppose there be such as hate thee personally; yea, that are in professed enmity to all that bear the name of *serious* professors of Christianity; A Gospel-conversation may do much, not only to *allay* or quench the flames of enmity and injuries, but also to turn them into friendship and kindness. The Gospel of peace hath a Medicinal vertue, to heal and make peace here.

It may be this just, amicable, peaceable deportment under all provocations, may *melt* them down
Prov. 16. 7. into a better temper. The cords of a man are cords of love. *When a mans ways please the Lord, it shall*

shall make his enemies to be at peace with him. This is a Lesson not only of the Divine Wisdom, who knows the ways of mans heart, and all its secret wards, but 'tis also a lesson of *experience: Saul* was a bitter enemy to *good David*, but when he had an evident proof of *Davids* fidelity, his tenderness, a spirit free from base *revenge:* How did it *take* with him? What a flood of Pathetical expressions of a heart moved with the undeserved kindness of this good man *David*, did it wring out of him? *Is this thy voice, my Son David! And Saul lifted up his voice, and wept.* —— *If a man find his enemy, will he let him go well away? Thou hast rewarded me good, whereas I have rewarded thee evil. I have sinned. Return, I will do thee no more harm.* 1 Sam. 24. 16. 1 Sam. 26. 21.

But if the Gospel of Peace (in the life and practice of it) do sometime *reconcile* an enemy, change his *heart*; how much more may it chain up his *hands*, or make him let *fall* his weapons of offence; especially, if we arrive to those more noble heights of Evangelical generosity, as to *love* our enemies, *bless* them that *curse* us, *pray* for them that *persecute* us, and *despitefully* use us; and let these be all the revenges we do, or *aim* at, to take of them. Methinks that petition (with the measure it proposes) in the Lords-Prayer, is of an high strain; *Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive them that trespass against us.* The sense of which is, If we forgive not our *injurers*, do not thou forgive *us*. Deal by us as *we* deal by them. If we wish *evil* to them that hate and abuse us, let our prayers be turn'd into the greatest *curse* that can fall upon our *selves*. If this be not our *meaning* when we utter this Petition Matt 5. 43, 44. Luk. 22. 34. Act. 7. 60.

tition to God, we are most *gross* hypocrites, or such *ignorant* Sots that we understand not our prayers in a most plain, *easie* instance. If this be our meaning, our practice will certainly in some good degree *conform* to it. And where 'tis so, it will be no mean inducement to the most *barbarous* to be at *peace* with us.

CHAP. IV.

An account of the nature of that Peace which is the design and tendency of the Gospel of Christ.

WHat I shall say on this head, will chiefly refer to that peace which is between *God and a reconciled sinner*; tho in some things it may extend to *other* parties *in*, and considerations *of* this peace.

1. *It is a Divine peace.*

1. A peace of which God *alone* is the author and contriver as to all the articles of it. All its articles that concern the Promises on Gods part, the terms and conditions of enjoying them on mans part, are all of Gods *sole* authority and disposing. No man on earth, nor Angel in Heaven, had any thing to do in their *composure*. God did never *treat* with any man to agree about the terms of the Covenant of Grace, nor to propose what he would be content to submit unto, for *reconciliation* with his God.

As

As the Law of *Commandments* on Mount *Sinai*, so the Law of *Grace*, and Covenant of Promise from Mount *Zion*, was so compleated by God *alone*, that no room was, or shall ever be left for man to set the least hand to it. No room left for any *alteration*, any *new* condition. God hath made a large abatement, and relaxation of the Law of Works, as a Condition and Covenant of Life; but of this Covenant of Grace, the Law and terms of life contained in *that*, he will bate nothing to the best, or greatest of men.

He that will have peace with God, must have it on Gods *own terms*, these *Gospel*-terms, or go without it, and shift for himself as well as he can. It is therefore call'd altogether *Gods Covenant* in Scripture, because tho man be one of the *fœderati*, yet he is so only by *accepting*.

This peace as to the Covenant on which 'tis founded, is called a Covenant of *promise*, to denote that, 'tis not terms of *justice* or equity on *our* part that hath any concern in it, any *plea* to make, 'tis all as freely and fully Gods, as gift it self. Eph. 2. 12.

2 *dly*, It is a Divine peace, as to the *accepting* it, closing with the *terms* of it on *our* part. I am not so silly as to say, that faith, repentance, Covenanting with God, are not *our acts*. I will affirm they are not only our *proper* acts, but also the proper acts of none but our selves. But yet that assistance, influence, vigour, by which we perform them, is so *little* our *own*, so much above the power of corrupted nature, that man is divested of all pretence of glorying, or pretending to it. I shall not need to produce a Scripture-confirmation, Chapter and verse, of our being *born* of God, of

the *Spirit*, not of the will of man, but God's; our being ſanctified by *him*, as well as elected or juſtified. 'Tis agreed on all hands, that our cloſing with, and embracing the Goſpel, which derives its peace to us, may be called Gods work, and is ſo beyond all diſpute, tho not without ſome *diſtinction*.

Secondly, *This peace of the Goſpel, is an holy peace.*

A peace that is neither patched up for unholy ends, nor by any unholy *means*. There is nothing in it unbecoming the Divine being on the one hand, nor man on the other. No temptation to any thing that is *indecent*, except it be uncomely to *part* with a *leproſie*, or a *ſhame* to be aſhamed of things moſt *ſhameful*; or a ſin to be *ſanctified*; or an unhappineſs to be ſaved; or below us to be ſo much beholden to the moſt high God, and to be bound to acknowledg it.

Thirdly, *'Tis a juſt peace.*

A peace wherein man hath infinitely more than *his right*, and yet God hath no wrong. A peace wherein God is unſpeakably *gracious* to man, and perfectly *juſt* to himſelf. No Attribute of God receives any affront, tho the ſinner goes unpuniſht, and the ſin clean remitted. *To declare, I ſay, at this time his righteouſneſs, that he might be juſt, and the juſtifier of him that believeth in Jeſus.*

Fourthly, *'Tis a faithful peace.*

There is nothing in this peace that will deceive or betray us. As the Goſpel tells us the beſt (as far as words can expreſs, and ſuch narrow ſouls as we at preſent can apprehend) ſo it tells us the worſt we may meet with in this way of Goſpel-

holineſs.

holineſs. It tells you of a Crown of Life, Righteouſneſs, and Glory; and it tells you alſo of many a *bitter Croſs*, of being *killed all the day long*, of a life in *this* world, filled with *ſpiritual* warrings, and the great fight is againſt the foes, which are ſo inſinuated into our bowels, our very *ſouls*, that we call them our ſelves. *Mortifie therefore your members which are on the earth.* What members are they? Col. 3. 5. are they right eyes, or right hands? Indeed they are not ſo in a *proper* ſenſe, but they are ſo in that rank and *value* they hold in the *corrupted* nature; and muſt be pluckt out, and cut off with our *own* hands, if we would enter into life. The Apoſtle enumerates ſome few of them; *Fornication, uncleanneſs, inordinate affection, evil concupiſcence, and covetouſneſs, which is Idolatry.*

The Goſpel tells you of the ſweets of peace with God through Jeſus Chriſt, and it tells you alſo of the *enmities* of the world, wherein you muſt expect to live as lambs among wolves. It tells you of the joys of Gods *countenance*, and the *ſmiles* of his face: It tells you alſo of the frowns of men, and of God too; if you deal unfaithfully with him, and unbecoming *his* children. It tells you of a glorious reward, an everlaſting reſt: But alſo that you muſt work, and run, and war, and wait, and deny your ſelves, and crucifie the *fleſh* with its affections and *luſts*. In ſhort, it tells you of God being your *Father*, the unſearchable riches of Chriſt your *portion*, the holy ſpirit your companion and *comforter*; but alſo that you muſt wholly reſign your ſelves to the will of God, and your Redeemer; to do and ſuffer what he pleaſes; you muſt live by *faith*, and not by *ſenſe*;

and cast the chief anchor of your hope on the *other* side the grave.

Isa. 57.21. Fifthly, 'Tis *a well grounded peace.*

Most mens peace is built in the *air*, and dreams Job 25. 2. & 22. 21. of their *own* imaginations. Their peace is a peace without a *foundation.* But the Gospel peace hath foundations, against which neither time nor storms, men nor Devils can prevail. The whole Fabrick is composed by Divine Wisdom, and defended by Divine power, and derived to the Saints Isa. 26. 3. by the Word and Oath of the only true God, imprinted in their souls by the Holy Spirit of Grace and Peace.

'Tis not a peace grounded on *sensuality*, legal Joh. 14. 7. righteousness, or *superstition*; all which are but *rowling sands*, and all the peace built on them will soon disband, and fall to ruins, and more woful Isa. 7. 27. disappointments. But 'tis such a peace that the more enlightened, awakened, and *scrutinous* the soul is, the more she is confirmed, and consolated in her peace. Yea the troubles, and emptyings of the *false* satisfactions of this world, do but make her so much the more happy, as to retire to this peace and rest wherein she is at home, and begins everlasting rest here.

Sixthly, 'Tis *a Peace that inlarges the Soul to a secure Meditation of all the Understanding is capable of.*

It is a sad Consideration of the Peace of carnal Worldlings, of all men *unreconciled* to God, that 'tis within a very *narrow* compass so *imprisoned* to present exterior things, that if they dare to step in their serious Meditations beyond these narrow Bounds, their Peace is in no small *hazard.*

If

If they look into their Consciences, such as can and dare speak truth, its reports are like alarms of War, or messengers of worse Tidings than of Death. Jer. 2.3.

If they look up to *Heaven*, that's none of their Treasure; they are not free of that holy and *happy* City, nor are they *meet* to be its Inhabitants. 1 Cor. 6.9 10

Death makes all their Life-time subject to Bondage. Isa. 33.14.

If they think seriously and genuinly of God, so much the more as they have a *Sense* of his glorious Perfections, so much the more terrible he is to *them.* All the Considerations of his Justice, Veracity, Omnipotency, Eternity, are *against* them. Yea, his very Patience, Mercy, Goodness abused, are the greatest Upbraiders of their *Ingratitude*, and threaten the sorer Destruction. Rom. 2.4.

If their thoughts look into *Hell*, they behold that *flaming* Furnace, that *bottomless* pit gaping upon them, and kindling in their own Bosoms.

If they consider *Eternity*, it looks to them, either very dark, empty and naked, or furnished with those Treasures of wrath they have heaped up by Sin and Unbelief, against the day of Wrath.

If they dare acquaint themselves with the great *Tribunal* of the Holy and Just one, and the best Pleas they can make there: Alas, how Self-condemned are they already.

But this blessed Peace of the Gospel gives the Soul that delightful *freedom*, that well-grounded *security*, that it can with an *assured* mind take its turn in any of these quarters. 'Tis its daily Conversation. Thence it is she fetches her chief Supports and Comfo[illegible] It is this World is her *Prison*, the Body her [illegible]*ns*, and Remain-corruptions her *Tormenters*. [illegible]er *Sallies* into those Regions which are so

so *bad* Airs to an unregenerate Soul, are her Recreations and *Reliefs*. Such a Person who embraces the Gospel with all that belongs to it, can look inward, and read the Testimonials of his *Sincerity*, and consequently, its interest in all the Blessings of the *new* Covenant. He can rifle over his Conscience without fear from top to bottom; he can appeal to it for his *Compurgator*. Whatever Evil yet lodgeth in his Soul, if his Conscience be *dim-sighted*, or partial, he loves it not so *well*, but he will apply himself to the *Supream* Lord, in those *honest* Expressions of the *Psalmist*, *Search me, O God, and know my heart. Try me, and know my thoughts; and see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me into the way everlasting.*

Psal. 139. 23.

Phil. 3. 20. Τὸ πολίτευμα ἐν οὐρανοῖς.

Heaven is the place of his *Citizenship* and Privileges, his daily *Walk*, his *Fathers* House, his everlasting Rest; his Heart is there *already*. That is the Mark his Eye is fixed on, the Prize he aims at in his Christian Course. Every serious *believing* Meditation of that blessed State, imps his Wings, puts new Life into him. His name is written there, 'tis prepared for him, and he for it.

The more free, frequent and *genuine* his thoughts are of the Divine Being, the more full and ravishing are his Delights and *Satisfactions*. All those Attributes and Perfections of Glory, which are a terror to unsanctified Souls, *shine* upon him in the Face of Jesus Christ. He beholds that Justice and Power, that frowns so *terribly* on an unconverted Sinner *reconciled* to him, greatning and confirming his Felicity, *transforming* his Soul into the Divine Image, ravishing it from the World and himself; to live in, upon, and to this blessed

sed and beatifying Object. It is one of the greatest acts of Self-denial he is capable of, to be willing to live at this distance from him. It is his chief support and stay, while in this Wilderness and Dungeon, that he shall *behold his Face in righteousness, he shall be satisfied, when he shall awake with his likeness.* Psal. 17. 15

Death is therefore become desirable. He can meditate its Terrors, and out of that *invincible* Conqueror extract *Sweetness*. Its Countenance is as amiable to him, as a broken demolished Prison to an escaped Prisoner. He can read that Text with a Comment to his own unexpressible advantage, *And delivered them who through fear of Death, were all their life-time subject to Bondage.* Heb. 2. 15.

He looks on *Hell* as a Flame that hath no Power on *him*, so much as to *singe* his Garments. Its Meditations have *these*, as its principal *Effects*. That he beholds in that *Misery* the evil of *Sin*, even of his *own*, the rich distinguishing and indearing Grace of God. The *pity* he owes to those yet within its Danger; how much he ought to love, serve, honour, long, and wait for that blessed Jesus from *Heaven*, *who hath delivered him from wrath to come.*

Seventhly, *It is a lasting and a growing Grace.*

1*st*, It is a *lasting* Peace; 'tis not a mere *truce* of a short period; 'tis not a Peace that depends on an *humour*, or mutable *contingent* Interests. It is a Peace that hath Gods *Covenant*, and the embracing Truth and Godliness for its basis. These are no *fickle*, feeble Foundations, they are alway of the *same* Countenance and Endearment. 'Tis built on Gods Covenant, which is *an everlasting Covenant, well ordered* 2 Sam. 23. 5.

dered in all things and sure. It is not every *defect* in the performance of Duty, nor every *false Step* we make in our walking, will break this Peace on *Gods* part. For while the heart is *sincere*, and the bent of the Soul for God and *Duty*, there's no Breach on the *terms* of Peace. The Covenant of God in Christ hath provided Pardon in *course* for common Infirmities, and Pardon upon *Repentance* for grosser miscarriages.

The Law or *Covenant* that was *too weak* to maintain our Peace, through the weakness of the *Flesh*, is not now the Covenant of *our* Peace: But such a Covenant as *supposes* our Infirmities, and hath provided a Justification in the sight of God, in a righ-
1 Joh. 2.1. teousness beyond our own. *If any man sin, we have an*
Phil. 3. 3. *advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous. We rejoyce in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the Flesh.*

And on *our* part, so far as we embrace and understand the Gospel, those Providences which are *dark* to *our* Reason, and unpleasing to the *Flesh*, will not produce hard thoughts of God or Godliness, and prove a make-bate in our hearts against them. We shall not be so foolish and unhappy, as to stumble at the Cross. *Great peace have they that love thy law, and nothing shall offend them.*

2*dly*, As it is a *lasting*, so it is a *growing* Peace. The more we grow in Grace, and in the Knowledg of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the wise Application of it to our own Souls; the more will our Peace grow, and burnish. It will not rest in a bare negative Peace, exclusive of trouble and uneasiness; but will be accompanied with joy in believing. Like generous Wine poured into the glass by a skilful hand, it will *sparkle* and have the Mod-

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ons and Countenance that will affect the Eye and Taſt with what is exceedingly grateful. But this Peace, tho capable of increaſe *here* to *abundance*, 'tis but a dwarf, an embrio, to what it ſhall arrive at in Heaven: 'Tis the ſame Peace begun here, that we ſhall carry with us *thither*, and which will there be conſummate, and in its higheſt Perfection.

Eighthly, *It is an* inward *Peace.* It is a Joy without *noiſe*, none of that which is like the crackling of thorns under the pot. It is a ſecret ſilent thing, that which the *ſtranger intermedleth not with.* It breaks not out into the vain and fooliſh Demonſtrations of a *wine-ſprung*-mind. It decorates the countenance with ſigns of an *inward* Pleaſure, a delightful Scene acted on the Stage of the *Mind*: Its great Concerns are with God and its ſelf, whoſe Communion is purely *Spiritual.* He *that drinketh of the water that I ſhall give him, it ſhall be* in him *a well of water, ſpringing up to eternal life.* Prov. 18. 1.

Ninthly, *It is a Peace that none under the ſound of the Goſpel want, but thoſe who careleſly or wilfully reject.*

Nothing but that unbelief, which is the *hardneſs* of the heart, can exclude and make us Strangers to this Peace. It is a *general* Peace in its *tenders.* God is ſo far reconciled in Chriſt, that none but by their own default need want this incomparable Peace. *God was in Chriſt, reconciling the world to himſelf:* What he did in, and by Jeſus Chriſt, hath laid the way open on his part. That which remains, is our Duty and Concern, *ſcil.* to be reconciled to God. *Now then we are Embaſſadors for Chriſt, as tho God did beſeech you by us. We beſeech you in Chriſts ſtead, be ye reconciled to God.* 2 Cor. 5. 18, 20. Upon this Conſideration,

Luk. 14. 23 tion, we are to *go out into the high ways and hedges, and compel them to come in*, that is, to the *Gentiles*, and the *vilest* of sinners among the Gentiles, and preach, and tender this *peace through Jesus Christ*, use all the Scripture-arguments; yea, those from the fall by *sin*, and the curse of the *Law*, and the *misery* of their condition under that fall and curse; and the blessed and gracious reliefs the Gospel of life affords; and not take a *denial*, if all the pains, and prayer, and patience, and means we can use may *perswade* them. But if all those will *not* do, we must lay the Damnation that follows, at their *own* Doors, their Blood, the Blood of their *Souls* upon their *own Heads*; their want of Peace is just on Gods, *wilful* on their parts.

CHAP. V.

SECT. I.

On what Foundation the Peace of the Gospel is laid.

1*st*, THE *Foundations of the Peace of the Gospel are laid in the eternal Counsels, Purposes, and good pleasure of God, and more especially of the Father.* He is therefore said to be Eph. 3. 9, 11. *The God of Peace that brought again from the Dead our Lord Jesus Christ.* This Gospel of Peace was first laid in the *eternal purposes* [of God] *which he purposed in Christ, and hid in God.* It was a Sceret that was formed in his *own* Bosom, and reserved to himself,

himſelf, till due time for its Manifeſtation. When this Counſel of God was revealed in its *new Teſtament*-diſpenſation, the Apoſtle refers all to Gods *purpoſe*, as the Original and *Rule* of it. *Having made known to us the myſtery of his will, according to his good pleaſure, which he had purpoſed in himſelf. In whom alſo we have obtained an inheritance, being predeſtinated according to the purpoſe of him, who worketh all things after the Counſel of his own will.* Eph. 1. 8, 10.

Here is enough, and that which is clear enough to an *indifferent*, *impartial* underſtanding, for the proof of what is aſſerted. The Foundation of our Peace, and the Goſpel methods of it, were not laid in Faith *foreſeen:* Were not laid in the Ideas, Imaginations or Contrivances of Man or *Angel*; none of theſe ever *thought* of, or *propoſed*, or were his inſtructors *in* this great and momentous matter. It was begun in Gods counſel and purpoſe, before Mans fall; yea, before Men or Angels had a being. There was nothing before this Counſel and Purpoſe either in order of *time* or *cauſality*. In ſhort, the eternal Thought and divine Grace conceived it in God himſelf; there was the firſt beginning, the firſt cauſe of the Goſpel of Peace.

Secondly, *It had its foundation in that agreement that was made between God the Father, and God the Son, before the World was.*

The *order* wherein the Perſons in the Divine Being were concerned in carrying on this Goſpel of Peace: The Father *propoſed* to the Son, the Son *conſented* to the Father, what ſhould be done and ſuffered by the *Son*, in the *Name*, and by the *Authority* of the Father. This is commonly call'd, The Covenant of Redemption. In this Covenant the Father and the

the Son were the *Fœderati*, or parties to the Covenant.

According to this *Covenant*, the Son *voluntarily* submitted himself to the *Law*, and Subjection to his Father. And he said, *It is a light thing that thou shouldst be my servant to raise up the Tribes of* Jacob, *and to restore the preserved of* Israel. *I will also give thee for a light to the* Gentiles, *that thou mayest be my Salvation to the ends of the earth.* These words may sufficiently *determine* who and what the Prophecy in this Chapter concerns; and that it is the Redemption of Sinners, *Jews* and *Gentiles*, by Jesus Christ; according to the Capitulation between the Father and the Son, here expressed.

Isa. 49. 6.

As the result of this Covenant and Law, to which the Son of God submitted: The Son of God makes profession of the *Pleasure* he took in the Execution of his Engagement to his Father. *In the volume of the Book, it is written of me, Lo, I come to do thy will, O God; yea, thy Law is within mine heart.* The 8th of the *Proverbs*, expresses the same things, with the great Contentment the Son took in the Prospect and Contemplation of his Converse with the Sons of Men, when he should become the *Immanuel*, God with us. I will add only the depositing these promises of eternal Life, and other subordinate Blessings of the new Covenant, in the hands of the Son of God, upon this Covenant of Redemption, which (to me) is the only Sense these words are capable of; viz. *In hope of eternal life, which God that cannot lie, promised before the World began.* And on this account many were actually *saved*, before Christs *actual* purchase.

Psal. 40. 6, 7, 8.

Prov. 8. 2, to 38.

Tit. 1. 2.

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The third foundation of the Gospel of peace was laid, in the Son of Gods actually performing his part of the Covenant of redemption, and the improvements of it.

By that *part* of the Covenant of Redemption, which the Son of God had by his consent unto, and agreement with the Father ingaged to discharge, I *mean* his taking, or assuming the human nature, more especially *the seed of Abraham*; and in that nature, not only to fulfil personally and *actively* the Law of *nature* as a man, and also the *Jewish* Positive and Ceremonial Law as a *Jew*, and under the obligation of a member of that Church: But also to suffer and take upon him all that affliction, and misery that filled up his state of humiliation, from his Conception to his Ascension.

I add also the improvements of this performance, because his being invested in the Kingly, Priestly, and Prophetical Offices in and to his Church, and in a more large sense to the whole world, is both a reward to his merit, centring in his own person; and necessary to carry on this Gospel of Peace to the full ends for which it was intended by God, upon all the Sons and Daughters of peace.

This *humiliation* of the Lord Jesus, was *it* that reconciled the justice of God to his mercy, and both to us. This made way for Christs *Ascension*, and entring into the Holy of Holies, *There to appear in the presence of God for us.* This obedience both active and passive, was rewarded to Christ by his Exaltation to Gods right hand; whereby he not only gives Laws and Pardons to his people, but is authorized to conquer *their* hearts to himself, and to *defend* them from all their enemies. *But unto the Son he saith, Thy Throne, O God, is for ever and ever,* Heb. 1. 8, 9.

a Scepter of Righteousneſs is the Scepter of thy Kingdom. Thou haſt loved righteouſneſs, and hated iniquity: therefore, God even thy God hath anointed thee with the oyl of gladneſs above thy fellows. But we ſee Jeſus, who was made a little lower than the Angels, for the ſuffering of death, Crowned with glory and honour, that he by the grace of God ſhould taſte death for every man. For it became him for whom are all things, and by whom are all things in bringing many ſons unto glory, to make the Captain of their Salvation perfect through ſufferings.

Heb. 2. 9, 10.

This Exaltation of the Lord Jeſus, makes highly for our peace, in all the parts of its adminiſtration. But the merits of our peace, in whatever methods it derives to us, is in the active and paſſive obedience of Chriſt; tho ordinarily aſcribed to his *ſufferings*: As our Juſtification to his *blood*: his bearing *our ſins* in his body on the Tree; our being healed by his *ſtripes*; his ſoul being made an *offering* for ſin.

It is diſputed what need there is of Chriſts *active* obedience, for laying the foundation of *merit* of this Goſpel of peace, and the bleſſings contained therein; ſeeing his *paſſive* obedience was ſufficient to diſcharge us from the *puniſhment of ſin*, of which the *pana damni*, or that of *loſs* was a part.

1. I anſwer, that his active obedience was neceſſary to *qualifie* him for the merit of his paſſive. Had he not been a Lamb *without ſpot* himſelf, he could not have been a meet ſacrifice *expiatory* for others.

2*dly*, Both active and paſſive obedience as they were *voluntary* on *his* part; he undertaking them not by any *neceſſity of nature*, but by conſent, was made under the *Law*; both of them had the nature of

of a free *act* in them, and as such were meritorious.

3dly, As Jesus Christ is the Head and Father of the Faithful, and they his members and posterity; whatever he merited for himself as Mediator, God-man in *one* person (which alone was capable of a reward, or an accession of any felicity it had not before) is communicated to them, which is a *strain* of happiness beyond what was, or could *be lost* by the transgression of the Law of Works. And this may be a sufficient *proof* that the Saints enjoy a greater happiness by the second, than they lost by the first *Adam*.

SECT. V.

The various methods and progress of the revelation of the Gospel of peace.

It is certain that not the least iota of the Gospel, or *remedying* Law, could arrive to the knowledg of *man*, by any *mere* natural light, or help. As the nature of it is wholly of absolute *Soveraign* Divine pleasure, so its *knowledg* must be derived to *us* by *supernatural* divine light. *But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him: But God hath revealed them to us by his spirit. For what man knoweth the things of a man save the spirit of a man which is in him? so the things of God knoweth no man, but the spirit of God.* Man in his integrity had a natural light, whereby he could discern his *whole* duty (except that which concerned the Tree of Knowledg, which was of positive obligation) and also what he might expect from God, as the *reward* of his obedience, or disobedience. But farther in *that* state, he neither had nor needed. 1 Cor. 14. 15, 16.

Therefore, as to all things that concern our new Covenant-state, we are said to be *built upon*
Eph. 2.20. *the foundation of the Prophets and Apostles, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner-stone.* i. e. Our knowledg of the Gospel, or Medicinal new Covenant, is built on what was revealed by God to the Prophets and Apostles; and by them to us, but *especially* by Jesus Christ himself. This renders the whole of the Gospel (as such) to be rather the object of faith than *knowledg*.

The first step of the revelation of the Gospel, was by some short and more dark hints of promises and prophesies.

The first dawning of this blessed day-light was, in those words, *It* (*scil.* the seed of the woman) *shall*
Gen 3.15. *bruise thine head.* The head of the Serpent; by which is to be understood the *Devil*. The seed of the woman should give him a mortal wound, spoil his designs, *destroy the works of the Devil*. It is to be noted as a special expression of the favour of God, that there was but a very *short* space of time betwixt the breach of the peace between God and his creature man, and the revelation of the means of reconciliation, betwixt the deadly wound and the application of an effectual remedy. This *circumstance* expresses the Divine bowels of compassion and grace, to be *suitable* to that of his *nature*, which is *essential* abstracted love. *God is love.* And it is to be observed that this was said by God (not *to* our first Parents, but highly concerning them) before there was any expression, or *appearance* of their repentance, that we read of.

The next Gospel-revelation we read of was in the sacrifice of *Abel*, which we may presume was in compliance with some Divine express obligation, and

and perhaps its ends explained. For it is ſaid that *by faith Abel offered a more acceptable ſacrifice than Cain.* Heb. 11. We have alſo the *Typical* repreſentation of Chriſt, by *Noah*'s Ark; and the ſaving of *ſome* therein, when the *far* greater number *periſhed* by the *univerſal* deluge. I will inſtance but in two more of this kind. The Covenant with *Abraham*, that in his *ſeed all the Nations of the earth ſhould be bleſſed.* And Gen. 12 3. *Circumciſion* the token of the Covenant, which ſignified that *Goſpel*-ſanctification, and ſeparation to God, from *ſin*, and the *ungodly* world, which by faith wrought in the heart and life, is the condition of the Covenant of Grace on our part, and gives a right to Juſtification and Salvation.

Theſe were ſhort and *enigmatical* diſcoveries of Goſpel-grace: the firſt dawnings which ſhined in the Old Teſtament *brighter* and *brighter*, until the *perfect day* of the New Teſtament Meridian-glory, according to thoſe words, *God who at ſundry times, and divers manners, ſpake in times paſt unto the Fathers by the Prophets, hath in theſe laſt days ſpoken to us by his Son,—— the brightneſs of his glory, and the expreſs image of his perſon.*

Secondly, *The Goſpel was revealed in Types, ſhadows and figures, all of Gods appointment.*

This was the next ſtep, which tho *wholly* Hieroglyphical, and therefore *dark*, yet the order and number of them were ſuch as gave an account in their language of Jeſus Chriſt in all his Offices; the New Teſtament Church in its order and purity in a good degree, but eſpecially of its Sanctification, and ſeparation from the world, by a *real* difference. But above all, of a *Crucified* Chriſt, and his Prieſtly Office. So that it might well be called

Evangelium velatum; and indeed it was ſo to the
2 Cor. 3. 16, 17. *Jews*, for *when they read, to this day the vail is upon their heart. Unto this day remaineth the ſame vail untaken away in the reading of the Old Teſtament.*

Thirdly, *By large and expreſs Propheſies.*

Somewhat we have of this by *Jacob* in the bleſſings of his Sons, but not much, till *Moſes* time. *Jacob* tells us of *Shilo*'s coming; *Balaam* (tho a bad man) a Prophet of a great good, *The Star that ſhould ariſe out of Jacob. Moſes* ſpeaks of a Prophet like unto *him*, that God would raiſe up. But *David* and the reſt of the Prophets after him (eſpecially *Iſaiah*) do ſpeak with that *clearneſs* of Jeſus Chriſt, and the Grace that is by him, that in many places they might be thought to have written *Hiſtories* rather than Propheſies.

Fourthly, *This Goſpel of peace was revealed in the greateſt clearneſs and perfection that we are capable of in this world, by Jeſus Chriſt and his Apoſtles, in the matter contained in the New Teſtament.*

Herein it was not only more *fully* declared, but its Doctrines and Ordinances ſtript of thoſe dreſſes and *masks* under which they were ſhadowed. Herein it appeared open and *naked* in its *ſimplicity*, its proper beauty and glory. As it was under the Old Teſtament *Evangelium velatum*; *ſo it is under*
2 Cor. 3. 18. *the New, Evangelium revelatum. But we all with open face beholding in a glaſs the glory of the Lord, are changed into the ſame image from glory to glory, as by the Spirit of the Lord.*

This was ſuch a *revelation*, ſuch a clear and *bare-faced* repreſentation of that life and immortality deſigned by the *New* Covenant; ſuch a *noon-day* brightneſs, that which preceded was comparatively

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but a night enlightned by ſome leſſer Stars: No glory by reaſon of this which *ſo much* excelleth. And well may this be eſteemed the *day-light* of the Goſpel, the Sun of Righteouſneſs *himſelf* being riſen upon us.

Fifthly, *By the Miniſtry of the Word and Ordinances, in the hands of thoſe whom Jeſus Chriſt hath graced, gifted, and called to that venerable imploy.*

The *matter* of the Goſpel revealed in the New Teſtament, would have been *comparatively* but a *dead* ſtock, a *ſealed* Book without this *Miniſtry*. Moſt men might ſay of it, as the Eunuch of the Propheſie he read, *How can I underſtand unleſs ſome one ſhould guide me?* To the preaching of this New Teſtament-revelation in the due *ſenſe*, conſtruction and application of it, our Lord Jeſus promiſed to be with his Miniſters *ſucceſſively* to the *end* of the world. Mat. 28. 18, 19, 20. The Apoſtles lived but the common age of men, yet ſufficient to lay and leave us the foundation, and by their Preaching and Miracles to give the Goſpel a conſiderable *entrance* into the world, and *intereſt* in the hearts of multitudes. But the ſtanding *continuing* Miniſtry is *neceſſary* to continuate and carry on the efficacy of that ſtock of truth derived from thoſe *maſter*-builders. Theſe are now (eſpecially the fixed Paſtors of particular Churches) the *Stars* in Chriſts right hand, the Ambaſſadors *Legier* of the Prince of Peace, to expound his mind, to proſecute the inſtructions of his Word, to promote his intereſt in the heads, hearts, and lives of men. Rev. 1. And as they are accountable to the *great* Shepherd and Lord of his Church, of their *manage* of that great truſt; ſo are all others with whom they have to do, of their carriage towards them,

Heb. 13 7, and improvement of their Ministry. *Remember them*
17. *which have the rule over you, who have spoken unto you the word of God, whose faith follow, considering the end of their conversation.*——*Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit your selves; for they watch for your souls, as they that must give an account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief; for that is unprofitable for you.*

SECT. III.

Sixthly, This Gospel of peace is yet farther revealed, *by the Ministry of the Spirit accompanying that of the Word.* The matter of Gospel-revelation, is in the Scriptures so *entire*, and compleat, as admits of nothing *new*; but it doth admit of such a revelation of its *sense*, and genuine consequence, as is new to *us*; but especially of a new and *farther* efficacy upon the souls of men, another taste, relish, and power than that which is contained in the bare letter.

This revelation by the Ministry of the *Spirit*, hath two parts.

1. Assisting to the enlightning the mind and *understanding* to the knowledg of the *sense* of the *written* Word.

2*dly*, Working *by* the Word, to the opening the heart to its *truths* and obligations, prevailing on it to *embrace* Gospel-truths effectually and savingly.

For the first of these, the natural abilities may go *far*, and acquired learning may help it on much *farther*, without any *special* assistance of the Spirit of God; yet the assistance of the Spirit in its *common* work may and does so *mend* the market, that they that are blessed therewith, may pierce much

much *deeper*, and with much more *ease* into the sense of Gospel-truths than those under the same circumstances *otherwise*, can do without it. And if the genius and skill in those far lower things, *scil.* of Gold, Silver, Brass, was imputed to the instructions of the *Spirit* of God, much more doth it by its assistance *advance* the intellect in what is more *sublime*, and doth more properly belong to it. And therefore we are directed to pray to God for the increase of this understanding, both for our selves, and Ministers. And this doth *imply* that we need a spirit more active, and penetrating than our own, to reach the sense of Divine Truths. Tho yet (as I said before) it may be obtained by the Spirits common assistance in a great degree. Exod. 31. 2,3,4.

There is also a farther understanding of the Scriptures, by the work of the *Spirit*, which is not properly a speculation, or a true notion of the things themselves, but a taste, relish and *sensation* of them; which is not so barren as the former *may* be, but a kind of *impression* and efficacy, which strikes the spiritual sense with some *experience* of that goodness and power, and *sweetness* which is in Evangelical Truths. And certainly this kind of understanding which lies in a taste and *sensation*, as it is a work of the *Spirit*, beyond that of a meer dry speculation; so it is such an one as is more prevailing and *lively*, and that which persons may receive that are far short of others in the *speculative* knowledg. And it may be are no way able to express it *intelligibly* to others, or form any distinct conception of it to *themselves*. As it is with Infants and Children, who do by a *sensation* of the sweetness of the breast-milk understand its *goodness* and difference from other

ther things, yet without any exact and *distinct* notions of it in the understanding. I may add for more *elucidation* of this truth, the notions that Book-learning hath of Countries, and the varieties of Fruits, and their as various *reliſhes*. No man will say but that the notions which they have of those Countries, and those Fruits, and their reliſhes, are of *another* kind, and far short of theirs who have seen and tasted them by their own experience.

I must say somewhat to that revelation of the Gospel, by which it is not only opened to the *understanding*, so as to form *in it* some due conceptions of it, but also by the work of the Spirit of God enlivening and *animating* the Truths of the Gospel, the will and affections are prevailed on to embrace and *conform* themselves to them; and as
2 Cor. 3. 18. the Text expresses it, *are changed into the same image from glory to glory, as by the Spirit of the Lord.* Evangelical Grace is here called *glory*, of which there are degrees. And the lowest degree is so glorious, that where it is wrought in the Ministry of the Gospel, it implies no less than the Spirit of the Lord working in it and *by it*. And indeed when all is said, this conforming the heart to the love and prevailing *practical* embraces of the Gospel, as it is the most contrary and difficult to *corrupted* nature; so it is that wherein the more *peculiar* work of the Spirit of God is *necessary*, and doth evidence its self. How easie it is for men of *quick* apprehensions, *refined* intellects, and exercised in Theological learning, to discourse, dispute, and preach Evangelical Truths with no mean accuracy and instruction to *others*, and yet themselves be chained up to a worldly *sensual* affection and conversation, is the sad and *common* experi-

experience. 'Tis certainly more easie for a person so qualified, to write a Volume of Excellent Truths, than to mortifie *one lust*, or reconcile his affections to a delight in *holiness*.

The use of understanding and reason meerly natural or acquired, may go a great way in enlightning our minds to *true* notions of the Gospel, and may go so far in conviction on the *conscience* and judgment, as that we may thereby be prevailed on to approve the things of the Gospel as excellent. But to open the heart fill'd with *enmity* to God and Godliness, to receive *the truth as it is in Jesus*, to a living *godly in Christ Jesus*; there must be more than the will and good inclination of the best of *faln* men. The Gospel by its *rational* construction may reveal its truth *to us*, but it cannot rise so high without a *higher spring*, as to form this light into an *answerable* disposition in the soul, which the Scripture calls the *new birth*, and the *new creature*. Eph. 2.10. *For we are Gods workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works*. There can be no less allowed as the genuine and *necessary* sense of these words, than that the disposedness to Evangelical obedience, is the work of God upon and in a soul *void* of any principles, *morally* inclined to those ends. *But as many as received him, to them he gave power to become the Sons of God, even to them that believe on his name; which were born not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.* Joh. 1. 12, 13. This Text needs no *comment* to clear its *sense*.

Seventhly, There is yet another degree and method of the revelation of the Gospel of Peace, and the peace of it. *And this is reserved for the other world.*

As the ultimate and *consummate* end of the Gospel

spel, is the Salvation, and compleat and eternal happiness of the Faithful; so till they arrive to that blessed estate, their knowledg, and the *means* of it, is *short* of that perfection it shall *then and there* receive. The present powers and faculties of our souls are too *narrow* to receive, and too weak to *bear* those manifestations and impressions of the glory of the reconciled face of God. That new wine which they shall drink with their Lord and Head Jesus Christ in the Kingdom of their Father, would *burst* these *old* vessels. What we have here is suited to our present capacity, in a language we can understand, and in a measure we may *contain*, which is but an *earnest* of the full inheritance; a cluster of the Grapes of the Heavenly *Canaan* to the *full vintage*; a small *sip* to relieve our faintings, strengthen our faith and patience, and keep up our longings in the way to the *promised* rest.

It is reserved to that state to know as we are known, to see that God face to face, the beholding whom in such a manner and measure, will compleat our likeness to him. Now the Gospel reveals to us that we who receive Jesus Christ, are the Sons of God, but the full consequence of that relation words cannot express, nor souls dwelling in mortal flesh comprehend. *Now we are the Sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: But we know that when he shall appear, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is.* The Gospel is *now* revealed to us, as to its *ultimate* end, the enjoyment of God *reconciled*, but in dark and *general* expressions *comparatively*, to what it will be in Heaven. In this world Ministers, yea the chiefest of the Apostles *know but in part, and prophesie but in part; but when*

1 Joh. 3. 2.

1 Cor. 13. 9.

that

that which is perfect is come, that which is but in part shall be done away. The words and tongues of men, are too scanty to express the Grace and glory of the Gospel. We do but lisp it like Children, and chatter as swallows. All we can say, or receive of it *now* is, but gibberish and *non-sense*, compared with the perfection of Evangelical Truth. We shall be sensible in Heaven that not the *half* was told us of what we shall there know and *sensate*. The secrets of its wisdom and grace will be found more than *double* to that which is, or can be now revealed or received. Job 11. 6.

CHAP. VI.

Some Objections against, and reflections upon the Gospel of Peace, from the contentions among its Professors, and the oppositions and unpeaceableness that hath arisen upon its first entrance into the world; obviated and answered.

SECT. I.

THAT there hath been *frequently* commotions, unpeaceableness, and violent oppositions, upon the *first* entrance of the Gospel into the several parts of the world; and (which is most to its disadvantage) contentions amongst the *professors* of it, and under pretence of a zeal *for it*, and its own warranty and *obligations*, is a sad truth, and too *manifest*.

The complaint made of the Gospel as such a make-

make-bait and breaker of the peace, is very ancient, and took it by the heel in its first steps and motions after Christs Ascention. What was there less in that
Act. 17. 5, 6. out-cry, *They drew Jason —— crying, These that have turned the world upside down, are come hither also. All the City was on an up-roar.* That the Gospel should meet with such entertainment, we have Christs fore-warnings. *Think not that I am come to send peace on earth, but a sword.* And the most unnatural sword
Mat. 10. 34. too. *For, I am come to set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother, and the daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law. And a mans foes shall be they of his own household.* But this is spoken not of Christs *intent*, or end of his coming, nor of the *tendency* of his Gospel in its *own* nature, but of its *event*. There is not the *least* seed in this Gospel that doth *naturally*, and of its *self* produce any thing *unpeaceable*, any thing of hatred, discord, or contention. But as the Apostle saith of the Law,
Rom. 7. 7. V. 12, 14. *Is the Law sin? God forbid! The Law is holy, just and good, and spiritual. But sin taking occasion by the Commandment, wrought in me all manner of concupiscence. Was then that which is good made death to me? God*
V. 13. *forbid! but sin that it might appear sin, working death in me, by that which is good, &c.* In short, the viciousness, Idolatry, ignorance, blind zeal of those to whom it came, took *occasion* from the Gospel for those disturbances, while the Gospel was perfectly innocent, and gave no such *cause* in the least.

We know that God the Author of all things, is *perfectly* good, essential *Love*. If it be asked, how comes it to pass that there is so much evil of Affliction and *Misery* in the World? The answer is ready, There is nothing but what is good that derives

derives from God, as its *Original*; and all evil of *Affliction* hath *another Spring*, which is *Sin*. And tho God be the moſt principal *efficient* Cauſe of all the Sorrows of Men; yet the *original* Cauſe, is *ab extra*. All good and *goodneſs* that derives to the Creature, is *originally* in God, it hath its firſt cauſe in his Love, Goodneſs, Benignity: But Afflictions (tho from God) are by a kind of neceſſity. His Juſtice indeed is ingaged therein, but it is by occaſion of Sin, by which the Divine Being is *wronged*, and affronted by his Creatures. Thus much only in the *Negative*, to the unjuſt Imputations on the Goſpel of Peace, and for the Explication of the queſtion.

I muſt now ſhew you, *whence* then it is that the Goſpel, and Contention, if they be not of kin, or agreed, do thus frequently dwell, and *walk* together. How come they to be ſuch *uſual* Concomitants, if they are not cauſe and effect? I ſhall anſwer firſt generally, or give ſome general Cauſes of ſuch *ſad* events, where the Goſpel enters, and then the more ſpecial Cauſes of unpeaceableneſs in the ſeveral places to be inſtanced in, and in individual Perſons alſo.

Firſt, *It ariſes from the great intereſt and power that Sin, the corrupter of Nature, hath in the Soul of faln Man.*

From whence come wars and fightings among you? come they not hence, even of your luſts, that War in your members? Jam. 4. 1. The Goſpel is not only deſigned and *adapted* to ſave, but alſo to ſanctifie the Souls of Men; not only to quench the Flames of *Hell* in the World to come, but alſo every ſpark of Luſt and Sin in us, while we are in *this* World.

Now,

Now, as the varying and *contradicting* Members of the Body of Sin, do militate in the same Subject one against another; so they all agree with all their might to oppose the Gospel, which is their *common* Adversary. And that which is the greatest *Misery*, and of all other to be *bemoaned* is, that Sin, the Corruption of Nature, hath so far insinuated it self into our good *Opinion*, hath so much of advantage by *Nature*, Custom, and long time of *Possession*; hath so *assimilated* us to its own deformed hateful *Image*, that we are fond of its *mis-rule*, and proud of its *Chains*; 'tis become our *familiar*; and tho it be the worst of the Devil himself, we are perswaded it will do us no harm. It is become so near *essential* to us, as if it were indeed no Foreigner, no *Enemy*, but a part of our very *selves*.

Therefore the Scripture speaking our Language and Sense, calls the wretched Members of the *old Man*, or Natures Corruption, our *right Eyes*, and our *right Hands*; and the mortifying Sin, our Death and *Crucifying*; and the restraint of our Lusts, *a denying our selves*. And can we now wonder at the Opposition rising so high against the Gospel, whose business it is to pluck up these Weeds by the Roots, to purge out this old Leaven, to separate us from those darling Lusts that lie so near our hearts, to commence a War irreconcilable in our own Bowels against this Enemy, that will not be wholly vanquished, till the Fort and Garison it possesses be dissoved? Yea, moreover, when the Sinner shall look on all his Pleasures, deriving from that relish his Sins give them, and that his awakenings out of its sweet *Dreams*, is no less than letting out his

his Soul, and letting loose all the Terrors of Hell upon him: Well, saith a sinful deluded Soul, I must overcome, and banish all the *Powers* of this Gospel, or it will destroy my so necessary Sins. This makes him buckle to its Opposition, and raise all the Powers of Earth and Hell against it.

Secondly, *From Satan, that great Enemy to the Honour of God, and Welfare of Men.*

Satan well knows that the Gospel is Gods *great* Engine to batter his Kingdom in pieces; to take the prey from the *Mighty*, to deliver his Bondslaves from the power of *Darkness*, and to translate them into the Kingdom of the dear Son of God. He knows that for this *cause* the Son of God was manifested in the Flesh, that he might *destroy* the works of the *Devil*. Col. 1. 13. 1 Joh. 3. 8.

We have a remarkable *Description* of Satans Opposition to the Gospel, *Rev.* 12. First his *diligent* attendance to destroy Christ *himself*, the Seed of the Woman, the *Church*, at his *Birth*, by the ministry of the ungodly *Herod*; then in his own *Person* to *ensnare* him by his *Temptations*; either of which having *prevailed*, the Gospel had been kill'd in the *Bud*, stifled in the *Birth*, and plucked up by the *Roots*. These attempts not succeding, he pursues the Church, drives her into the Wilderness of *Affliction* by his Persecutions, that the Gospel and its Professors might be so ill accommodated in all outward appearance, that few should be prevailed on to embrace it so much to their *cost*. This was the state of the Gospel, and the Gospel-Church under *Heathen Rome* in the three first Centuries. Rev. 12. 1, 2, 3, 4.

But this course not prevailing neither, (for the Gospel and its *faithful* profession never lost either

its reputation, or *number* of adherents by *persecution*) he insinuates himself into the Church *it self*, and by an hypocritical, rotten-hearted generation, aiming at nothing less than the high and *holy* designs of the Gospel, mingles himself with its *sincere* professors. And now he plays his Master-piece by fighting against Christ under his own Colours. Certainly the days of this temptation are the sorest and the perilous times predicted. *In the last days*

2 Tim. 3. 1,2,3,4,5. *perilous times shall come, for men* (professing the Gospel) *shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, proud, boasters, &c.*

καιροὶ χαλεποὶ Ἐσονται. The word rendred perilous in this Text, may be read *difficult*, difficult *times shall come*. And what more difficult to *discern* than a *Devil* transformed into an Angel of *light*; Satan in the appearance of a *principal* Minister, and a *zealous* promoter of Christ and his Gospel? This new, hypocritical, dangerous, and Tragical Scene is described, *v.* 7.

Rev. 12.7. *And there was war in Heaven, Michael and his Angels fought against the Dragon and his Angels, and the Dragon fought and his Angels.*

By *Heaven* in the Text, we are to understand the *Church on Earth*, in that latitude, which takes in all the *professors* of the Christian Faith. It was this Church, wherein as on a *Stage* or *Theater* this Battel was fought. By *Michael* and his *Angels*, we are to understand the Lord Jesus, and all his Faithful Ministers and adherents. By the Dragon and *his* Angels; Satan and all that side with him, under the *visor* of the Christian name and profession, *corrupting* its Doctrine, and Discipline and Order, and contending for these corruptions by word and deed against Christ and his Faithful adherents, for

pro-

promoting thoſe luſts and intereſts by the *Goſpel profeſſion*, which it doth in its *genuine* nature, and tendency, moſt abhor and *oppoſe*.

This Battel, tho it began in ſome ſmall *Bickerings* and skirmiſhes in the days of the Apoſtles; yet till *Conſtantine*'s time, when much of this world was poured into the lap of the *Church*, and was a prize thought worth *contending* for by men whoſe principles taſted *nothing* above earth; the Dragons party were not ſo *great* and numerous as to perform any great matters againſt the truth, *as it is in Jeſus*. But what it hath done ſince, is ſufficiently *apparent*; and what it may do for the *future*, the Providence of God (for ought I know) will be the only Key to open.

By what hath been ſaid, the *cauſe* of the contèſts and *diſquietments* attending this Goſpel of *Peace*, is manifeſt. And where the corruptions of the luſts of *men*, abetted by *worldly* intereſts, and inflamed by the *ſpirit* of Satan to ſuch an oppoſition, do meet, we need not wonder at its unreaſonableneſs and *fierceneſs*. We have a *common ſaying* of thoſe men who act at a rate of Villany and violence beyond the common rate of *human* force, That *the Devil is in them*; and certainly where *his energy* is added to *human* oppoſition to the Goſpel, as we have ſhewed; the conteſt and confuſion, the diſquietneſs and oppoſitions cannot likely be ſhort, of what we have ſeen and heard of.

SECT. II.

I ſhall now conſider more particularly the cauſes of this diſquietneſs.

Firſt, In the *Jewiſh* Church.

Secondly, Among the Heathen world.

Thirdly, In the professed Christian world.

Fourthly, In *Individuals.*

First, The causes of disquietness upon the Gospels entrance amongst the *Jews:* That there was such disquietness and *oppositions*, is so well known to all that read the Scriptures with any degree of understanding, that I need not give you a *syllable* for the proof of *that.* The first cause I shall assign is, *The disappointment of their great, but ungrounded expectation of the Messias to come in the Majesty of a worldly Potentate, and delivering the* Jewish *Nation from the yoke of* Rome-*Heathen, and advancing it in external splendor above all other Nations.*

The mistake that ran current among the *Jews*, of the *true* meaning of those Prophetick Texts of Scripture, which *prima facie*, or literally, spake of the *Jewish*, or *Israelitish* Church and their Kings, as clothed with all the worldly pomp and observance imaginable; But their mystical and *true* sense being of the spiritual seed of *Abraham*, or the Children of *Abraham* by promise; and that *spiritual* glory of them, and their King the Lord Jesus. I say this mistake was the cause of their irreconcileable prejudice against Christ and his Gospel.

We find the Disciples of Christ themselves were not *wholly* cured of such false conceits; no, not after their Lord was crucified; and they ran so strong in their minds, that they inquire of him, *Wilt thou at this time restore the Kingdom to Israel?* meaning that external freedom and glory aboveſaid.

Act. 1.6.

Now the unconverted and *worldly*-minded *Jews* could not endure to have their ungrounded expectations *so far* disappointed and *contradicted*, as to have

have a Messias, a King, a Saviour born in a *common Inn*, Cradled in a *Manger*; whose condition in the world placed him in the form of a *servant*, brought up among the *Chips*, no way concerned or intermedling with worldly Politicks; the most abject, hated and *despised* among men. The Throne of whose glory in *this* world was a most painful and shameful *Cross*; executed betwixt two *notorious* Malefactors, as the most criminal of the three; his *Courtiers* a few poor *Fishermen*, his most frequent addresses to Publicans and Sinners. And all that his Doctrine *proposed* to them, being but a self-denying mortified life in this world, and the hopes of a happiness and eternal life in the other, grounded on the *merits* of him who was not thought worthy to *live* in this world, nor to die *within*, but as an accursed unclean wretch to be cut off *without* the City.

They commonly covered his purity and glory with the reproach of one born at *Nazareth*, whence no *good* thing could be expected, a friend of Publicans and Sinners, the Carpenters Son, a Seducer, a Glutton, and a Wine-bibber, a Blasphemer, a caster out of Devils by Beelzebub, the Prince of Devils. Upon these considerations, *many were astonished at him, his visage was so marred more than any* Isa. 52.14. I. 53.2,3. *mans, and his form more than the sons of men.* And as the Prophet proceeds, *For he shall grow up before him as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground. He hath no form or comeliness, and when we shall see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him. He is despised and rejected of men, a man of sorrows, and acquainted with griefs. And we hid as it were our faces from him; he was despised, and we esteemed him not.* But

how unreasonable were these causes of quarelling Christ and his Gospel, which were so necessary qualifications of *both*, seeing that without *them* the Errand of the Messias into the world would have been wholly *frustrate*, and their reconciliation to God and eternal Salvation desperate and *unattainable?* How unreasonable to be offended at the Son of God, for stooping so *low*, and giving such a pattern of *condescending* love? Why should they not rather than *stumble* at such an humble *crucified* Christ, and a Gospel answerable, be offended at their own pride and *vanity*, in preferring an earthly before an *heavenly* glory; and at their being so blind and hardned, and ignorant of the *Scriptures* they boasted their skill and value of? Surely the Sacrifices, and Prophesies, and Rites of their Law, did so plainly represent the Messias in this humble and afflicted estate, and his Gospel to be so pure and *heavenly*, that they must as industriously shut their eyes, and *wink* out its light, not to read therein such plain truths, as they hid their faces from his *person*, as below their acknowledgments.

The second cause I shall assign was, *the danger they supposed or pretended, That if they received Jesus, and his Laws, Cæsar would be incensed, and their Nation instead of being saved, would be destroyed.*

Joh. 19. 15. *If thou let this man go, thou art no friend to Cæsar. Whosoever maketh himself a King, speaketh against Cæsar.* This was the charge they urged against him, they pretended to be great *Loyalists*, and very tender of *Cæsar's interest*; altho it is plain that they abhorred his authority over them. No language was more sweet to them than *freedom* from his yoke; nor intolerable to their ears than paying him the just acknow-

knowledgment of an *easie* tribute. We may read their hearts thorough all their *pretences*, in this one passage, *If we let him thus alone, all men will believe on him, and the Romans shall come and take away both our place and Nation.* Jesus Christ had by his Doctrine, Life, and Miracles, given such an evidence of his being sent of God, that their consciences told them no honest heart could *withstand*. Let them have but their *free* course, and they would run and be glorified of *all* men. But a slavish unreasonable fear that *Cæsar* would deprive them of their worldly possessions (not any regard to the interest of *Cæsar*, their *souls* or their *God*) raised their hatred of Christ and his Gospel to such a fermentation. But they little thought that by rejecting this Prince of Peace, and his Gospel of Peace, they should so provoke the *God* of Peace to become their enemy, that he should send against them those very *Romans*, whom they so much *flattered*, and they should take away both their place and Nation to this day, and wrath should come upon them to the *utmost*. Thus wisely do men provide for themselves, by *fighting* against God, and rejecting his *counsels*. *He that sinneth against me, wrongeth his own soul; and he that hateth me, loveth death.* Joh. 11 48. Prov. 8. ult.

When it came to the last trial of their ingenuity, and not only the innocence and excellency of the Lord Jesus pleaded his *acceptation*, but *Pilate* a heathen *Roman* Judg pleads his *justification*; tells them after all their clamours that he found no fault in him at all; yet they proceed on the *old* Topick, the pretence of a *mighty* regard to *Cæsar*, *We have no King but Cæsar*; tho still at the *bottom* lay those unworthy principles of unreasonable fear, and self-love; Joh. 19 15.

love; and I may add, *profound* ignorance of Christ and his Kingdom. Why no King but *Cæsar?* Could they not have had Christ for their King, and *Cæsar* too? To be a *good* Christian, and a good *subject*, are so far from an *inconsistency* that the better Christian any man is, the better subject he will be. Yea to be a good subject, and good in every relation, is a good part of Christianity.

Thirdly, Another cause was that, *Christs Doctrine did so much slight and oppose their hypocrisie, and ungrounded expositions, and traditions of the Elders.*

The Scribes, Pharisees and Elders of the *Jews*, had so great an opinion and interest with the people, that they became their very *shadow*; followed their dictates as Oracles, and were perfectly inslaved to their impositions. If we look into their expositions, how narrow and corrupt were they? How far from that perfect and sincere holiness the Law obliges to? How far from that love to their neighbour (so much the substance of the Law) was that Comment, *Thou shalt love thy neighbour, and hate thine enemy?*

What were their Traditions but trifles at *best?* such as washings before eating, cleansings of cups and vessels? But that of their *Corban* was the most *inhuman*, that for a gift to the Temple, which they pretended was to God, they were discharged for *ever* of any obligation to *relieve* their own Parents in their greatest *necessities* or misery. These with their abominable hypocrisies, the Doctrine of Christ was an enemy to, and for that cause the whole body of the *Jews* were enemies to that, and its Author.

But was there any reason they should quarrel with Christ and the Gospel for these causes? What

What *good* did their hypocrisie do them, but make them stink in the nostrils of God, for seeking by such dissimulations to perfume their reputations with *men?* What were their Traditions worth, which they did not so much as *pretend* any authority for, from God; but were only to gratifie that pride that loves to be observed and honoured; tho by robbing God of his honour, and making void his Commandments by their Traditions?

Fourthly, *The dissolution of the Jewish Church-state, with all its Temple-worship.*

This Church-state consisted of two things:

1. Of an external *figurative* Worship, with Rites and Priesthood suitable belonging to it.

2. Of their being the *only* Church of God in the world, separated from *all* other Nations and people by Gods choice, with some rites of this signification.

The first of these carried with it a glory that was very *dazling* to the eyes of beholders, admired for its pomp, richness and contrivance; not only by the *Jews*, but by all Nations. Two things relating to it they excelled all Nations in, first, in the matter and form of their *Rites*, and order of their Priesthood. No Temple on earth so celebrated as that at *Jerusalem*, no order of Priesthood, and their Vestments so *venerable*. But 2*dly*, and that which added a greater glory, They were Gods *own appointment*; they had his authority to justifie and sanctifie them, and the wisdom of his contrivance to put a *beauty* on them.

It was not the *moral* Law of the *Jews* that so signalized them among other Nations, for that they had *all* of them written in their *hearts* (tho not

not in so clear a Character) as the *Jews* on the Tables of Stone; but it was the *Ceremonial* Law. This kind of Worship and Rites the whole world in those days had their Religion made up of, of outward pomp and Ceremony, of *mystical* sense, and some of them secret to all but their principal Priests, and these were their most venerable mysteries. In these things the *Jews* had no temptation to change theirs for any of their neighbours. And the second consideration of Gods appointment, and contrivance out-did theirs beyond all measure.

But here I must make a short stop to tell you, that the Heathen pretended no less for *all* their worship, and its *rites*. The whole of their *Sacra* was alway pretended the *appointments* of their imagined Deities. Nature was not then so blind as (tho it mistook so greatly the Gods they worshipped) as to mistake so far as to believe that their Deities would accept any worship at their hands, the order and *forms* of which they receiv'd not first from their Oracles. But what were Imaginary Deities to the true God? What was a National, Provincial, or City-ministerial Demy-god to the only true Supreme God, and Lord of Heaven and Earth?

This Glory of *External Typical Rites* and Worship, the Gospel utterly stripped them of, and left them to the naked *simplicity* of Spiritual Worship (except the two *positives* of the Lords-Supper and Baptism) *The time cometh, and now is, that they that worship the Father must worship him in spirit and in truth. In spirit*, not in carnal rites, material things without life: *In truth*, not in shadows and *resemblances*, which are but *appearances*, not the things themselves. This

This the *Jews* could not bear; yea, the *converted Jews* were hardly brought off from *them*, when they were *espoused* to Jesus Christ and his Gospel. They were willing to entertain him and his more manly and real furniture and order, but also they would fain have retained their *childish* shadows. And indeed we have *little* cause to wonder at their lothness to part with such a *splendid* order and worship (*once* of Gods appointment) at the call of the Gospel, and their rising up in opposition to it, for this (tho but supposed) *wrong*; having so near our doors *less* things of meer and *confessed* human invention so hotly contended for.

But what reason had they to be offended at the Gospel, for removing *beggarly* Elements, *carnal* Ordinances, to make way for Spiritual and *real* exercises and enjoyments, suited to an intelligent *rational* soul? What reason to rise up in such a *fury*, for removing the Picture, when the person it represented was to take up its room? to be offended at parting with that which was no glory, by reason of that which excelleth, and which the Gospel brought along with it?

2*dly*, The privileg of being Gods *peculiar* people, the only *Church* in the world, being *abolished* by the Gospel; made the blood *boil* in their veins at the very *mention* of it. *Isaias* was said to be very bold, who dare adventure to deliver a message of *this* import from God *himself*, *I was found of them that sought me not, I was made manifest to them that inquired not after me.* And tho they had little patience for the Apostle *Paul*'s defence, yet, *they heard him to that word. And he said unto me, Depart, for I will send thee far hence unto the Gentiles.* Now they could hold Rom. 10. 20. Act. 22. 21,22,23.

hold no longer, all patience was broken. *Away with such a fellow from the earth, it is not fit he should live.*

Wherefore all this anger? was it because he would preach the Gospel no more to them? No, that was it they had no mind to; but to carry it to the *Gentiles*, to break down the *partition*-wall, to preach a Law from heaven that shined with an *equal* grace on all mankind, this galled them, and filled them with the bitterness of envy. But alas, what evil did the Gospel do in this? what wrong did it to the *Jews?* Had not the Sun of Righteousness *light* enough to impart to all the world? and all at one time too, in which he excels the Sun in the Firmament? I shall say no more on this head, but the *apparent* as well as *designed* conclusion, That this cause of their disquietness on the Gospel approach, was altogether *unreasonable*. The Gospel was no *criminal* party to the breach of he peace.

SECT. III.

The causes of disquietness and opposition among the heathen world, upon the approach of the Gospel of peace into their quarters.

The Scriptures (especially the History of the *Acts of the Apostles*) do so fully bear witness to the matter of fact, that I am unwilling to imply a suspition of my Readers unacquaintedness of so notorious a truth; tho I shall take leave to add, that there was none, or little of violent opposition from the *heathen* for forty years, but what was stirred up by the *Jews*, who dwelt in their several Nations and Cities. *Nero* was the first *Roman* Emperor that by *publick* prosecutions opposed it: And in many places it was entertained friendly by *them*.

Cause 1. *It cast down their Idols, and rendred their Idolatries unreasonable and damnable things.* It

It might well seem hard to *men* to have their gods (tho but imaginary ones) *blasphemed*, as they took it. For the Gospel declared the one only true God, excluding not only by what that implied, but *expressly* all their Idols to be *false* gods; yea, *devils* and not *gods*; For such *Dæmons* they were that joyned themselves to their Idols, and gave forth their Oracles. What we read of the man *Micah*, when his Levite left him, and took his *Images* with him, is the *exact* Specimen of the humour of *Idolaters*, that are (pardon the term) *religiously* so. *What aileth thee* (said the *Danites* to *Micah*) *that thou comest after us with such a company? And he said, Ye have taken away my Gods which I made, and the Priest, and ye are gone away, and what have I more? What is this that ye say unto me, What aileth thee?* All the complaints and *emotions* of the soul imaginable, are no such extravagant things as to be wondred at in *such* a case. Judg 18. 23, 24.

And I may here take leave to observe, that as *too ordinarily* the professors of the one *only* true God, are criminally and *unbecomingly* loose, indifferent, and defective in their respects to him and his worship whom they can never value to *excess*: So the Votaries of false gods, and *false* worship, are commonly beyond all measures in the zeal of their Idols and *Superstitions*. *I perceive* (said the Apostle of the *Athenians*) *ye are in all things too superstitious.* Their Religion (such as it was) which they deemed the fear or *service* of the gods, had *no bounds* in the outward expressions of it. And therefore, tho they had *altars* to gods, and *Lords* many, too many, almost *innumerable*, and their *Sacra* and Rites so excessive, they must add one altar to the *unknown* God, that Act. 17. 22. κατὰ πάντα ὡς δεισιδαιμονεστέρους ὑμᾶς θεωρῶ.

that they might compass within their Religion the very *Terra incognita* of Religion. This the Apostle expresses by *Dæmon-fear*, which like the Devil is tyrannical, tormenting, holding men always on the rack of doubt that they have not done enough to secure themselves of being *accepted*.

And if we consider what hath been said, with this addition, that the Heathen as they represented their Deities commonly by *human* shapes and forms, so also by human *passions*, and the worst of mens *vices* as their qualifications, as theft, murder, uncleanness, treachery, drunkenness, and all manner of debauches, and luxury; and agreeable to this, were the actions by which they pretended to honour and please them, *scil.* Feasts, Plays, Drunkenness, obscenities, and vicious excesses. These things (I say) considered, as the cause is plain, so the unreasonableness of opposing the Gospel for such causes is as plain and obvious.

Secondly, *The Gospel proposing the Son of God made man, and him crucified, to be the only Mediator of our reconciliation, and acceptance with God, and our eternal happiness; with the Doctrines of the Trinity in Unity, Resurrection of the Body, and other Mysteries revealed, and peculiar to the Christian Religion.*

These great and fundamental Truths of the Gospel, were the *mysteries hidden from* many *ages*, and which nothing but Divine Revelation Supernatural could make known to us, nor any thing short of *miraculous*, the apparent *finger* of God, be a sufficient conviction to man that these things were the Revelation of God.

The Heathen had some apprehension that some extraordinary thing was to be done to appease and reconcile

reconcile to men their angry Deities, but especially the Supream God. They had their rites and mysteries, they had their sacrifices of *blood*, and sometimes of *human* blood, among the more civilized Nations. The former sort may be presumed to be received *first* by tradition, the spring and origin of which to them was utterly lost. The latter, (if in imitation of what was commanded to *Abraham* not executed) was begun by the Oracles of him who is the great *Abaddon*.

But their Mediators were their demi-gods, such as were once Heroes among men, whom for their excellent vertues and usefulness when in the world, they placed in heaven as gods of a second rank, and such they thought worthy to interpose betwixt the supreme God and men, by their intercession and ministry. But how unlike to these notions of their Mediators was a crucified Carpenter's Son, an illiterate mean malefactor, for such were their notions of him, which the unbelieving *Jews* were industrious to furnish them with?

Therefore as a crucified Christ was a *stumbling* block to the *Jews*, so he was to the *Greeks foolishness*. Foolishness to believe that this Mediator with God would have any such *efficacy* as the Gospel pretended; foolishness to believe that they ought to make him the object of their faith and worship. It was the common reproach of the Christians among the Heathen, that they worshipped a *crucified* God. And this was the first rise of the figure of the *Cross*, worn on mens apparel. For the Christians to tire them, and discourage them from so reproaching, they did hereby let them know that they took it not for their shame, but their glory. 1 Cor. 13. 21.

The

The Doctrines of the Gospel which asserted the Trinity, Resurrection, &c. they *derided*, because they did not understand them. That of the Resurrection was derided by the learned *Athenians*. *What* (said they when the Apostle preached it) *will this babler say?* No wonder at all *this*, seeing they lookt on themselves as able to penetrate by their wit and learning into any truth; and what was beyond that prospect, they rejected as foolish.

Thirdly, *Their misrepresenting the Gospel and practice of Christians to the greatest disadvantage for absurdities and impieties.*

There were no crimes so brutish and vile that they did not charge upon the Christians and their Religion. The Christians had large experience of the blessedness our Lord Jesus pronounced of them,
Mat. 5. 11. of whom *all manner of evil was spoken falsly for his name-sake.* It was the measure Christ *himself* met with, who did all things *well*, who was on earth the *infallible* Oracle, the Essential and Divine *Word*. He was reported to be a Seducer, a Deceiver of the people, a Conjurer, and Glutton, a Wine-bibber, and what not? The Scriptures give us a large account of the reproaches cast on the Apostles, and the *primo-primitive* Christians, that they were stirrers up of sedition, enemies to all Government; yea, that they had a principle *pregnant* of all mischief, *scil.* to stir up one another *to do*
Rom. 3. 8. *evil that good might come thereby.* It would be too large to recite what some of the Fathers, especially *Tertullian*, *Justin Martyr*, and *Origen*, report of the Slanders the Heathen raised on the Christian Doctrine and practices. As that they had *no* Religion at all, but were perfect *Atheists* (which is supposed

to

to be the *first* cause of the Christians calling their Ministers by the name of *Priests*, and their Communion-Tables by the name of *Altars*, for that those who had not these, were thought by the Heathen to acknowledg *no God*.)

The Christians were *misrepresented*, as guilty of Whoredoms, Incestuous meetings, feeding on human flesh, yea that of innocent *infants*; which the Heathen maliciously grounded on their Doctrine of eating the *flesh* of Christ in the Sacrament, tho the true sense of that Doctrine, and the Christians practice was, a *Spiritual* feeding on a *Crucified* Christ, by a lively faith.

They were *falsly* charged with setting the City of *Rome* on fire: All mischiefs (whoever were the Authors) the Christians must bare the *blame* of. All plagues of death, Famine, Inundations, and whatever was adverse, was imputed to the wicked Doctrines and lives of the Christians. This caused it to be the common cry of the deceived imbittered people, *Christianos ad Leones*, whenever any such thing hapned.

We may see that this way of *misrepresenting* is not a *new*, but an old trick of the *Devil*, who being *Satan*, so malicious an *enemy*, turns *devil*, a false *accuser*, and accuses, that he may be to the Saints a true *Abaddon*, their cruel *destroyer*. And this has been so *successful* an Engine against the Gospel, and its sincere professors, that the Father of lies will never leave it 'till he be cast out of Heaven, and bound hand and tongue too, as is written of him. *And* (the Dragon and his Angels) *prevailed not, neither was their place found any more in heaven. And the Dragon was cast out, that old Serpent* Rev. 12 9, 10.

called the Devil and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world. He was caſt out into the earth, and his Angels were caſt out with him. And I heard a loud voice ſaying in heaven, Now is come ſalvation, and ſtrength, and the Kingdom of our God, and the power of his Chriſt, for the accuſer of our brethren is caſt down, which accuſed them before our God day and night.

This *Context* is doubtleſs to be underſtood of *Satan*'s being caſt out of the *Church on earth*, or the Eccleſiaſtical *ſtate*. And his accuſing of the Saints before God, is of the *ſame* ſenſe with that in *Job*, of Satans appearing in the preſence of God among the Angels to *accuſe Job*; and as the Text ſaith, *moved God againſt him*, i.e. *to prove his integrity by afflictions*.

Job 1. 6, 11.
Job 2. 3, 5.

CHAP. VII.

The true cauſes of oppoſition, and unpeaceableneſs in the profeſſed Chriſtian world, and eſpecially among the profeſſors of Chriſtianity.

THIS hath been *partly* agitated in *Sect.* 1. to which I muſt refer you, that I may not do the ſame thing over again. But I ſhall *here* add divers other cauſes which deſerve to be *ſeriouſly* conſidered and laid to *heart*. It is no *ſtrange* thing that the Goſpel ſhould meet with oppoſition from a people perfectly *ſtrangers* to it, and ſuch as are prepoſſeſſed with a veneration for that which the Goſpel is a profeſſed adverſary unto, and cannot

not conſiſt with, as it certainly cannot with Judaiſm and Heatheniſm in the *ſame* Creed or practice.

But that thoſe who do not only *acknowledg* the light of *nature* common to all *mankind*, or the Scriptures of the Old Teſtament, common to the *Jews* and Chriſtians; but the *New* Teſtament, with its Expoſition of the Old, and are the profeſſed Diſciples of Chriſt; I ſay, that theſe ſhould not only live at ſuch a height of *variance*, but *pretend all* from the conduct of, and *zeal* for the Truths contained in the ſame profeſſed *common rule*, is not more ſcandalous and lamentable in its *effects*, than monſtrous in its *own* nature. Some of the principal cauſes of this evil will appear in what follows.

SECT. I.

The firſt I ſhall mention is, *That in the viſible Church there is a* mixture *of ſincere Believers of, and Votaries to the Rules of the Goſpel, and ſuch as are pretenders, outſide profeſſors, and very hypocrites.*

Thoſe Parables concerning the Kingdom of God, *i.e.* the *viſible Church*: The Goſpel being like a *Net* that takes of all ſorts of Fiſhes, good and bad. The Parable of the *Sower*; of the field of *Corn*: All theſe import the *mixtures* of ſincere Chriſtians, and *hypocrites* in the *viſible* Chriſtian Church; and that its ſtate ſhall continue ſo more or leſs, beyond the cure of the beſt men, and the means *they* can uſe, till the *end* of the world; then the *angels* ſhall make an exact, perfect, and eternal ſeparation of the one into the Heaven of the *bleſſed*; of the other into the Hell of the *accurſed*. Mat. 13. 3, 24, 28.

This mixture considered, and such as runs too much through it in all the parts and veins of it: How can it be expected that all should move in a quiet and peaceable order? The principles of the one and the other (notwithstanding the greatest unity in profession that can be imagined) are not only *divers*, but diametrically *opposite*, as believers and unbelievers, born of the flesh and of the spirit, such as are of the world, and their affections and designs *governed* by it; and such as are taken *out* of the world, their hearts set on the things *above*, and their designs and motions answerable; such who are sincerely and intirely resigned to God in Christ (which is the true *Sanctification*) and such who are inslaved to their *corrupt* humours and interest. In a word, such as are truly enlightned, and quickned by Divine grace; and such as are blind and dead in trespasses and sins. There will be a time indeed (for the mouth of the *Lord* hath spoken it) when, *The wolf shall lie down with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid, and the calf, and the young lion and the fatling together, and a little child shall lead them. And the cow and the bear shall feed their young ones, and shall lie down together, and the lion shall eat straw as the ox, and the sucking child shall play on the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put his hand on the coccatrice den; they shall not hurt nor destroy in all Gods holy mountain, i.e.* Though the adversaries to the Saints shall retain their old natures, yet there shall be from the all-ruling power of God an effectual restraint laid upon them. Tho their hearts shall not be changed, their hands shall be chained by an extraordinary and Divine influence, which the Text intimates to us, *For the earth*

Isa. 11. 6, 7, 8, 9.

earth shall be full of the knowledg of the Lord as the waters cover the Sea. The sense of which I suppose to be either that there shall be such an universal knowledg of the Lord as shall convince men of the interest and justice of at least an amicable correspondence with the sincere professors; and of the superfluity of naughtiness, the inhumanity that is in a feral brutish deportment; or, that the sanctifying knowledg of the Lord shall obtain so generally, as that the upright ones shall have so far the ascendant over others as to keep them quiet and peaceable, tho against their own natures and inclinations.

SECT. II.

In and among those that are sincere professors of Christianity, there are too many sources from whence naturally this disquietness arises.

1. Conversion and Sanctification is not *so perfected*, in those in whom it is *real*; and the principles of it *radicated* in their souls; but there are sad remains of *corrupted* nature in all the instances of it in the best of men, much more in those that are true Christians, but without an hyperbole *the least of all Saints.*

And these remains of corruption in them (tho under some restraints by Grace) will not be altogether still and idle. The flesh will be *lusting against the spirit*, and too often bringing good men *into captivity to the Law of sin.* So far as these lusts *prevail*, they will diffuse into Kingdoms, Cities, Families, Churches, all converses, those hateful fruits of disquietness, and most of all into their own

souls, which are so near the spring-heads, and through a gracious tenderness most sensible of the disorder.

If those chief Apostles *Peter* and *Paul*, such eminent Saints, had sinful distempers in them to raise a *quarrel*; and *Paul* and *Silas* fell out to a *parting*, what may be expected from the common rank of Christians? But let us all along take this with us, that it was none of the Gospel, none of their *Christianity* that was in the *fault*, but a defect in their *compliance* with it. *Whence come wars and fightings among you, come they not from your lusts, &c.* This is spoken of real Christians.

Gal. 2. 11. Act. 15. 39. Jam. 4. 1.

Secondly, And more particularly, *It arises from the different sentiment of good men, of the mind of God in the Scriptures.*

I dare be bold to say, that were it not for this, all contests would be for ever buried, or very *short-lived* among real Christians. That the Scriptures are by all professors of Christianity owned to be the Word of God, is an unspeakable mercy; for, thereby the *standard* of truth is preserved. That all sincere professors are willing to acknowledg it *practically*, is also a very happy consideration. Yet, while either ignorant *defects* in the knowledg of its sense, or erroneous determinations *contrary* to its sense, carry so great a party, and have some share in all; we must know how to separate causes and effects, or expect no such blessing as an universal peaceableness amongst all real Christians.

One only cure is left, which is to agree *in aliquo tertio, i.e.* to embrace that Gospel cure of the symptoms and effects of this disease in the *eyes*, which is, *To forbear one another in love*; to be of one heart, and

and one soul, with a *non obstante* to many different sentiments. And indeed God has not promised that babes and men shall ever in this world understand *alike*, but love and forbearance he hath both commanded to all now, and hath promised shall be the blessing of the Saints in the days of the Churches glory in this world.

Thirdly, *It arises from a false construction of each others sentiments, and commonly erring on the worser side.*

It is a fault among Christians (too notorious to need proof) to believe, and report of one another that they hold opinions which they do not; but it may be *detested* in their very hearts. And also that those opinions which are really theirs are *false*, when it may be they are true, or nearer the truth than their own. This breeds ill blood, and malignant spirits; alienates affections, and makes to much the greater soreness on the *one* part, because they know they are wronged and slandered. And indeed (as it too often happens) when once a contention and difference is raised, *one* part will be glad of any pretence true or false to speak evil of the *other*; and remove to a *farther* distance from brotherly love; and that which is worst of all, be very *sorry* if an evil report or surmise of the adverse party do *not* prove *true*.

I am afraid this is so *Epidemical* a disease, that too many better Christians in *other* respects, will find themselves *touched* with a taint of this *peace-breaker*. It is a truth that as to *fact* cannot be refelled. All that I must say in *apology* is, that I hope when they come to see it in themselves, they will cry as loudly, crucifie it, as any other *can do*.

Fourthly, *From an immoderate zeal for the promoting or defending the interest of some doubtful and lesser truths.*

I would be loth to be guilty of giving any discouragement to a *godly* zeal, at this time especially when 'tis so rare, and at so low an ebb. Yet I shall say of that zeal that, as where 'tis genuine and guided by a due proportion of light and discretion, 'tis the very sparkling beauty and cheerfulness of the Graces; so where 'tis adulterine, a wrong zeal, nothing is more mischievous and monstrous.

The most beautiful faces (they say) look most terribly when anger possesses the features, and we all know that fire out of the Chimney is far worse than *none* at all. *It is good to be zealously affected* (saith the Apostle) *in a good matter.* But a zeal not according to *knowledg*, or according to *error*, is too commonly a *Jewish* hard hearted zeal. *I bear them witness that they have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledg.* The converted *Jews* had a zeal for the *Law*, to the prejudice of the *Gospel*, and the righteousness which is by *faith*. The unconverted *Jews* had so great a zeal for *Moses* against Christ, that they thought *they did God good service*, by killing his *Christian* servants. Such an one was *Saul* in his *ignorant* zeal, such were many of the Heathen in their *Idolatrous* zeal.

Gal 4.18. Rom. 10. 2,3. Joh.16.2.

And this zeal where 'tis in a *right* path, may so far out-run its measure as to over-run many greater Truths, and run upon the very bellies of those who stand in their way, and whose knowledg, sobriety and grace far excels; and to destroy that Christian love and peace, without which Christianity

anity it self looks more like a fury than the birth of the God and Gospel of *love and peace.*

The Scribes and Pharisees were branded as *hypocrites*, not for tything of Mint, Annis and Cummin, but for being *more* zealous for those *minutes* of Religion, than for its more weighty concerns of *judgment, and the love of God.* No truth is to be *slighted*, but may sometimes be *concealed*, and must always give way to greater and more weighty Truths, as to their agitations and interests. Christ taught his Disciples as they *could bear. We can do nothing* (saith the Apostle) *against the truth, but for the truth*, i. e. Our obligation in the discharge of our Ministry is so to circumstance it, as may most promote the truth, considered *round*, and taken together. Luk. 11. 42. Joh. 16. 12.

Sometimes men have let forth their zeal into the Channel of some one circumstantial or *non-essential* truth, so that they have been dry to all others. The contention about meats had well nigh this effect among some of the primo-primitive Christians. And I have known some among our selves, that have so far *buried* all truth in some one disputed *non-essential*, as to distinguish of persons as in or not in the *truth*, as they have espoused or rejected *that*, without farther explication.

Strange divisions were among the *Corinthians*, who should carry the bell for the best Preachers, *I am of Paul, I of Apollo, I of Cephas*; and the interests ran so high, that they were *puffed up for one against another.* Proud of their choice, and partial adherences. It may be there was a difference in their Gifts, and Ministerial abilities, but they and their Gifts were all for Christ, in the edification of the Church. How foolish and childish a heat was this controverse? 1 Cor. 3. 4. Cap. 4. 6. *ult.*

Pro-

Proportion is a great word, and hath all *wisdom* lodg'd in it; to give to every thing its *due* measure. Could we arrive at *this*, all false or immoderate zeal, which is but a *dark heat*, would vanish, and the peace of the Gospel be rid of a fierce and unreasonable adversary. Errors and vanities in Religion would lose their advantages which they obtain when received for Truths and Duties, tho *confessedly* lesser ones. And sure I am that in all Controversies we shall see never the *worse*, nor have our light the less *clear*, for a calm, meek, and quiet spirit.

SECT. III.

Causes of disquietness arising in the minds of particular persons when the Gospel enters into their consciences by its Convictions.

It is an ordinary thing to reproach the faithful Preaching of the Gospel of Peace and purity, with the *troubles* it raises in mens minds, and that it makes them distracted and melancholly. It may be so in its *events*, but either its Preachers are very *imprudent* in the dispensation of it, or the true cause of such sad effects, must be found in somewhat else, and not the Gospel. I shall therefore faithfully, and as briefly as I am able solve this *knot*, and shew how far the Gospel contributes to this unquietness of mind, and to its *cure*, and then leave thy Conscience to judg of its faultiness, or *innocency* in this matter.

First, *It doth in faithfulness and good earnest discover to men the horrors and misery of their condition, in a state of corrupted nature, of alienation from, and enmity to God and godliness.*

It tells men plainly and *convincingly*, That all they inherit

inherit by their birthright from our first Parents, is but sin, misery, error, impotence, folly, and an *utter* incapacity of being *happy*; and an exposedness every moment (while in that state) to the just wrath and severity of a wronged, affronted Almighty God: *That all the world is become guilty before God*, subject to the curse of the Law, *condemned already* to the wages of sin, which is death, *eternal death*. That they are in that state *strangers to the Covenant of promise*, not having any *promise*-security of being out of Hell *another* moment. Either let men deny the *truth* of all, or any of these things, and make their denial *good*, or not blame the Gospel for telling them so great Truths so *nearly* touching them. What wonder if these things *startle* and amaze men that have lived so long without the knowledg, or a serious *sensible* thought of them that have dropped into the stream of a benighted *sensual* world, and been carried down smoothly and *insensibly* with it all their days; without putting these great questions *home* to themselves, What am I? How came I into being? What *errand* was I sent into the world about, by that God whose wisdom cannot be *supposed* to raise such a Fabrick as *man*, and have no design in it, but to leave it to take its *own* course, eat, and drink, and play, and sin, and die as the beasts without farther account of its matters?

Rom. 5. 12 Psal. 51. 5. Job 11. 12. Rom. 3. 19. Joh. 3. 18. Rom. 6. 23 Eph. 2. 12. Job 35. 10.

Will you quarrel the Gospel for this? or your selves who would otherwise have slept on in this wretched state and course, till you had slept the sleep of *eternal* death, and never been *awakened*, but in unquenchable flames, out of which there is no *redemption*? you may as well quarrel him as a foe

foe to your *peace*, who warns you how near you are to a precipice, which you are blindly running unto, and within a step, of that you may alter your course; or who gives you notice of a *leak* sprung in the Ship, that carries your lives, and all your concerns in it, because it gives you the trouble of hard *pumping*; or that *awakens* you out of a dead sleep, when your house is on fire, and the flames ready to devour you, because he hath *spoiled* a good nap, or lost you a pleasant dream, and put you into a short affright.

Secondly, *It distrests men by taking them off from false foundations of hope of the cure of their misery, and to an interest in Gods favour, and eternal life.*

It is true that the Gospel doth as well awaken men from sleeping on a *wrong* pillow of security, as from an *insensibleness* of the misery of a state of sin. Our Lord Jesus himself warns us that we build not on the *sands*, but on a rock; that we may not be buried *alive* in the ruins of our hopes, but may be able to stand in present trial, and in the last judgment. It tells us that *if we live after the flesh* (whatever our knowledg or professions may be) *we shall die. That he that believeth not is condemned already.* That a *meer* civil life, or *moral* righteousness, will not *justifie* us in the sight of God. No, nor our personal *Evangelical* righteousness, or real *sanctification*, by its own worth or value, but the righteousness of Christ embraced and relied on by faith. That such a faith in Christ as is without *works* in the *adult*, is not *saving*, but *dead*, and will leave us exposed to an *eternal* death. That all our knowledg, profession, and attendance on external Ordinances and Worship is but a shadow without

Mat. 7.26. Rom.8.5. Joh.3.18. Rom.3.21 Phil. 3. 1, to 11.

without substance, a body without a soul, if not *animated* by a sincere *dispositedness* to the obedience of faith, a real prevailing respect to all Gods Commandments, both of the first and second Table. That he that is offended at the Cross of Christ, or sufferings in and for adherence to his duty, hath no *Gospel*-worthiness or meetness for the Kingdom of Heaven. That a Sacramental, or *Symbolical* regeneration by external washing, or baptism, without spiritual real sanctification, is no *such* regeneration as will *secure* salvation to us. That all who are of the *visible* Church (whether universal or particular) on earth, and not real Saints, under a real change to holiness of heart and life, shall notwithstanding (if so living & dying) be shut out of Heaven.

Mat. 10.38

1 Pet. 3.21

Mat. 25.2, to 8.

But if these faithful admonitions of the Gospel cause disquietness in the minds of *those* who lean on these *Bulrushes*, and shelter themselves in such deceitful *unwarranted* refuges, let them not blame the Gospel for telling them their *danger*, and rowsing them up to a sincere *effectual* faith and holiness; but let them blame their wilful ignorance, error, laziness, love of the flesh's ease, and indulgence and real unbelief that takes up in such hypocrisies, for their disrest. The Gospel disturbs them but in those ways of peace that will be bitterness in the latter end, and would not have them bring forth an *abortive* birth which after high expectation and *some* travel is a *double* wo.

Heb. 6.10, 11, 12.

If men will presume that if they do not wrong their *neighbour* they are *righteous* persons, tho they make no conscience of repentance towards God, nor faith towards our Lord Jesus Christ; 'tis as reasonable for such men to expect peace with God, as

as for *malefactors that are in a Goal* to expect to be acquitted by the Judg and the Law, *merely* because they have not wronged one anorher, tho they are Traytors to their Prince, and have trampled all his Laws under their feet.

Believe it, those who have received the light of the Gospel, and will not live a Gospel-life, *they* turn that light into *fire* in their own bosoms, *arm* Conscience against themselves, breed that *worm* that will eat out all their comforts, and by its continual corrodings begin a *hell within*. If they will hold the *truth* in unrighteousness, Conscience will break loose upon them, and accuse and torment them. Whereas if they walked in the light of Gospel-precepts and promises, their *little-case* would be turned into those comforts, and that peace which passes all *understanding*, if not that joy which is *unspeakable* and full of glory.

Thirdly, *Where the Gospel is sincerely embraced, disquietness may arise from divers causes.*

1. *From the want of assurance of their sincerity, and Gods favour.*

Saving faith, and the faith of *assurance*, are *two* things, as different as is *true* believing on Christ, and believing that we *do* believe. The first must needs be before the *second*, as the existence of a thing must be before we can know that it is. Many a good soul lives in doubt of the latter all her days. But where there is the *former*, the concerns for eternity are *secure*; for *the Lord knoweth who are his*, tho they do not. But if they understood the Gospel and themselves, all their tormenting doubts would soon *vanish*. They have a proof of Gods love in their souls, and the light of the Gospel

spel tells them so, but their eyes are so *dim* through ignorance, melancholly, fear, suspition, or Satans temptation, that they cannot *see* it. No wonder these good hearts are unquiet for the *present*, while to them, or in their apprehensions they are *free among the dead*. But this is not the fault of the Gospel, but of their own ignorance of the truth.

2*dly*, From *the motions and prevalencies of remaining corruptions*. This is not only the cause of continual agitations in the soul, the spirit lusting against the flesh, and the flesh against the spirit; but besides that, all those motions of sin discover a sad source of sinful evil yet dwelling and abiding in us, and those motions and actuations of it are not only reluctancies, but rebellions against the Law of God, and spirit of Grace. The events are oftentimes to sins advantage, and we are led captive by it for a season: *What I would, that I do not; but what I hate, that do I.* Rom. 7. 15

But if men shall be *offended* at the Gospel of Peace, and object against its *title* as incongruous, upon these or the former considerations; it is without all *shadow* of justice; for all its tendencies are to a righteous, real, satisfying, and durable peace; and will certainly procure it where it meets with a full and due compliance. But so far as we are defective therein, the banks are broken down, and sin and miseries break in upon us. And to a sanctified observing spirit, the effects, but much more the cause cannot but be grievous.

To conclude, If it shall be said that then what hath been spoken in the behalf of the Gospel of Peace, is all *idle* and to no purpose; because 'tis acknowledged that in the best there is, and *will* be that,

that, which as long as they abide in flesh will resist, and obstruct its efficacy. I answer first, That as the *ultimate* design of the Gospel is to bring us to that state wherein our peace shall be compleat; so notwithstanding all the troubles that arise in the *mean* time to a sincere *upright* soul, this felicity of everlasting rest will be the certain issue. And for our present *militating* state, there are in it (while we vigorously press toward that mark) that kind and degree of peace which *passes all understanding*, with the *present* satisfaction that arises from the *prospect* and sense of that *perfect* peace, that Crown of Glory, Righteousness and Life, which we are *nearer* to, by every day that passes over our heads.

I must not leave this blessed and beautiful Doctrine, without some improvement. It being such a well of life and truth, we shall therefore let down our Pitcher, and draw from thence some rational conclusions for divers services.

CHAP. VIII.

SECT. I.

The Improvement of the Doctrine.

THE first End I shall improve it to, is the informing our understandings of these considerable Truths.

First, *That they are the greatest enemies to peace with God, men, and themselves, who are enemies to this Gospel of Peace:* Who are enemies to its *peaceable* progress and entertainment in the world, and to its pre-

prevalency in their own hearts and lives. The Gospel taught in its purity and power, and learned in its knowledg and practice, is the *all-heal* of the greater and lesser world. They who attempt it *without*, or in *contradiction* to this, are Phylicians of no value, *the way of peace they have not known.*

2*ly*, That *so far as men have not peace in themselves, or are unpeaceable towards others, they differ from, and are Nonconformists to this Gospel of Peace*; *i.e.* so far they are from the perfection of Christianity. Men may and ought to contend for the Truths of the Gospel; but they that contend against the peace of it, or for its truth or peace unpeaceably, give it a *back-blow*, which is most *fatal*. It will be somewhat a more *happy* time when men shall be reputed Christians more or less, according to their peaceable principles, dispositions and deportments towards God and men.

3*ly*, This Doctrine shews us, How *unbecoming the professed Ministers of the Gospel of Peace, it is to be unpeaceable themselves*; *but especial'y in their Pulpits, where they stand in the stead, and speak in the name of the God of Peace*, Mat. 24. 28 to the end.

Certainly for *such* men, especially in the Pulpit, to vent Sedition, faction, hatred, wrath, enmity, instead of *peace on earth, and good will toward men*; say their lesson *backward*, and will sooner preach the Gospel *out* of the world, than *into* the hearts of men.

4*ly*, Then *God is the God of Peace*. The Scriptures say it in so many words, but this Gospel of Peace proves it, If Gods *say-so* had needed a proof. There was nothing could constrain or move him to frame such a Gospel of Peace, but his own na-

with him, and be at peace : i.e. Let the knowledg and sense of God awe thee into a better than a *froward unquiet* temper of spirit under his mighty hand; or, let the knowledg of the wisdom and goodness of God send thee to such constructions of his most severe Providences, as may perswade thee to expect with patience a happy issue.

2 Cor. 13. 17. 4*ly*, *Examine your selves whether or no this Gospel of Peace hath laid the true foundations of peace in your own souls. Examine your selves whether ye be in the faith; Prove your own selves. Know ye not that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates?* Somewhat I shall say for explaining the *last* word of this Text, whose *misconstruction* hath startled many, supposing that it means all those are *Castaways*, utterly rejected of God who *know* not that Christ is *in them.* Whereas the import of the word *here* is, *without proof*, or that *judgment* and sagacity by which it is to be *discerned.* But we return to the Exhortation.

Ἀδόκιμοι

He determines *blindfold* this great question, whether for or against himself, who doth it without serious and due *examination.* The Peace of the Gospel in its *consolations* derives from a reflect act upon our state. Our state as being in the *faith*, possessed by its *principles.* Christ in us in his dominion and spirit of Grace, is the *promise*, from which an enlightned judgment and Conscience draws peace as the improvement and just conclusion. I will not put so much upon examination as some do who are exercised almost in *nothing* else. For 'tis my opinion after deep *consideration* of the case, that many lose their peace by *over-doing* in seeking it this way. And that to be pressing forward in our duty and resignation *practical* to the obedience of faith, is

the

the shortest cut to peace, and raises its evidence to such a degree, as is not only to be seen with more ease and *certainty*, but *felt* also. To love God, and truth, and holiness, and live in the exercise and pursuit of them as our *main* end and business, will hardly leave room for a doubt of our sincerity. Yet I would have both allowed a due share in our exercises. Let not the peace of the Gospel be of so low a value, or an indifferent thing with thee, as not worth both the pursuit and the examination of thine interest in it.

SECT. II.

The comfort of knowing upon due inquiry that we are interested in the peace of the Gospel. The prudence of seeking the truth in this matter, concerning our selves. The security and tendency to a change for the better, which is in knowing our not having the peace of the Gospel. Some Exhortations to such who embrace not the Gospel savingly. I shall handle all these briefly.

First, *The comfort of knowing our interest in the Peace of the Gospel.*

Every thing, whether good or evil, affects with joy or sorrow as it toucheth us, or is our concern. Relation to, or propriety in whatever, doubles and puts the accent and emphasis upon it. To know that this God, this Redeemer, and this Covenant and Gospel of Peace is ours is another kind of pleasure of a higher relish unexpressibly more grateful and comfortable than the most accurate knowledg of all the excellencies that are in them abstracted from our relation to them, and interest in them. Therefore the wise Merchant when he had found the inestimable Pearl bought the field wherein those riches were, and sold all he had to make the pur- Mat. 13. 44

Prov. 31. 16. purchase. And the wise woman *considereth a field and she buyeth it*; that is, that it might be *her* field.

It is a great unhappiness to know a good that is without our reach, or that we have not somewhat within our reach that can supply its room. This may be one construction of that truth, *He that increaseth knowledg encreaseth sorrow.* Eccl. 1. 18. But to have it not only possible to be ours, but certainly so, affects with proportionable pleasure. This is the happiness of assurance which is more than meer saving faith without it; That we can rejoice in what we have in hand, and what we have in hope. We begin to reap in this life. We can draw water of life out of the Promises as out of our own Cistern. As the great blessing of the Covenant of Grace lies in this relative particle *my* or *thy*, my Lord, and my God, I will be *their* God, *their* Father; So the great consolation is in the knowledg of our interest in him.

Wicked men, yea the *Devils* themselves may know as much of the being of God, and his infinite perfections, and of the Grace of the Gospel, as a Saint, or an *Angel*; but this is so far from contributing to their *comfort*, that 'tis the very flame of their trouble, they could rather wish they *were not*, and the cause is, that they know them as a felicity inaccessible by *them*. Certainly no less comfortable is the knowledg of the Treasures of the Gospel as *ours*; this unites *us* to them, and communicates their comforts to us. To be particular in the comforts of a well grounded assurance, would fill a Volume by its self. I shall add only, that all the good of the life that *now is, and that which is to come*, we can then put in ballance against the evils and afflictions

flictions of this *present* life. This will not only *overballance* them, but render them *light* afflictions indeed.

But 2*ly*, supposing that upon examination we find not an answer of peace, but on the *contrary*, that in our *present* state we are in the gall of *bitterness*, and have no lot in *this* matter of the Peace of the Gospel. Had we not better have saved our selves the trouble of *searching*, than to find an *insupportable* trouble, a sentence of death upon record against us, that we have nothing to do with peace?

I answer, That the case the thing in its self and really is but the same; 'tis not the true or false conceptions that make any alteration therein, yet there is a mighty advantage in the knowledg of the Truth, though the Truth do not presently make us free from, but feel our misery which before we had no sense of. For,

First, *It is a happiness to be undeceived.* And it must be so, if it be an evil to be deluded and *cheated.* I have read of a Prince whose General being defeated in a battel: The General sent him news of a great *victory*, which was the cause of three days *rejoycing* in Court and City. But the *truth* being soon brought to light, and the General returned, he was demanded by his Prince how he durst put such a *trick* upon him. He answered that the three *joyful* days they had in the room of three *melancholly* ones, in case they had known the *truth*, might not only excuse him, but *merit* some thanks for his good policy. I leave you to judg what was his reward for such a mockery. And what improvement to make of it to my present purpose.

2*ly*, Considering that tho we are at *present* strangers to the Peace of the Gospel, having no interest

rest in the Covenane of promise, yet this sad condition is not unalterable, 'tis not incurable, *'tis a most necessary and good step to a well-grounded peace.* A conviction of our present misery is exceedingly desirable. I cannot blame those Physicians and friends that bury the truth in *silence*, when the Patients condition is hopeless. But to conceal a *mortal* disease that's *curable*, to save a little present ease or satisfaction to the Patient, would be a cruel treachery. *The whole need not the Physician* (saith our Saviour) *but the sick. i.e.* 'tis a dangerous thing to think our selves *whole* when we are not; for then we supposing no need of the Physician, will not go to him, and will slight him if he *come to us.* That man that is arrived at a conviction of his present evil state, and a due *sense* of it, and a knowledg of the *remedy*, is gotten a great way toward a *happy* change. The *Jews* that slew the Lord of Life were pricked at the *heart* by their convictions, but that *stab* at heart was a *happy* one, a *healing* one for them; for, it led them to the Lord of Life, to whom never any came for life in good earnest, and went away without it.

A second Exhortation well grounded on this Doctrine that the Gospel is a Gospel of Peace, is, *That you would not deceive your selves by seeking peace where it is not to be found*, nor in any method but what the Joh.6.68. Gospel proposes. There 'tis to be found, and the way to it, and *no where* else. We seek the living among the dead if we go to the creature, or nature, or to God himself without Jesus Christ. *To whom should we go*, (said Peter) *Thou hast the words of eternal life.*

Fourthly,

Fourthly; Bleſs God that you are yet under the ſound and tenders of the Goſpel of Peace. The *fallen* Angels, ſo much more *excellent* by Nature than you, never had ſuch Grace *appeared* to them. Thoſe Men and Women who are gone to their *place*, *dying* in their Sins, ſhall never have its tenders *again*: this *laſt* might have been your *preſent* caſe; the only Grace of God hath made the difference; acknowledg it by bleſſing, and glorifying *him* for ſuch an unſpeakable Gift.

Fifthly; Embrace the Goſpel of Peace, that you may injoy the Peace of the Goſpel: Embrace its Promiſes, its Precepts, its Doctrines and Counſels: Embrace its Mediator in the acknowledgment of all his Offices, of Prieſt, Prophet, and King; in the chearful ſubmiſſion of your ſelves to him, to his Merit, and Interceſſion; of your Faith to his Doctrine and Teaching; of your whole Practice to his Law and Government. I have ſhewed in this Tract, in many Particulars, what are its Characters and its Comforts, to which I ſhall refer you for Motives to this Duty; only I ſhall add two more in this place.

1. You can never have a well-grounded Peace till then. *There is no Peace to the wicked, ſaith my God.* And all that embrace not the Goſpel tendred to them, are wicked in *his* ſight, tho not *flagitiouſly* wicked among Men. The righteous and the wicked divide all Mankind; under one of theſe diſtinctions we muſt be found, in the great day of Diſcrimination for *Life or Death* to all Eternity. If no due regard to God and the Redeemer: If quenching the holy and gracious Motions of the Spirit of God: If deſpiſing the Riches of Divine Goodneſs: If Iſa. 57. 21. Mal. 3. 16.

Enmity to sincere Evangelical Holiness: If the highest Ingratitude to divine Love, Bounty, and Pity: If a wilful hard-hearted living to Sin and Vanity, and being altogether dead while we *live*, to that God and his righteous Ends, who gave us our Being out of *nothing*, be to be *wicked*; every Man and Woman rejecting the Gospel of Christ, are wicked with a witness. God hath said, there is no Peace to such; none but delusions and dreams of Peace; 'tis not all the Advantages thou canst promise Peace to thy self from, will be able to afford it, no not for the present.

2. This Peace of the Gospel *will cost you nothing but what is next to nothing, or worse than nothing.*

What are all the Treasures, Honours, Dominion, and Pleasures of the World, but *next* to nothing? A great part of the World (saith one) is but a Crumb which God casteth to a Dog. *Wilt thou set thine Eyes on that which is not?* (saith *Solomon*) who had Time, Experience, and Wisdom above all *mere* Men, to make a true Judgment of *this* World, and all the Contentments that can be extracted from it; Vanity of Vanities is the brand put upon it by him, and by the common Consent of all *considering* Mankind.

As for the Corruptions of our *Natures*, our foolish and *hurtful Lusts*, our Ignorance, Error, hardness of Heart, alienation from God, Indisposition to all Evangelical Goodness, our Deserts or Demerits, which are all the Evils of Affliction we are capable of *here*, and hereafter: If these are not worse than nothing, I know not what is. And are these hard *Terms* of Life and Peace, of Covenant-Union, and Com-

Communion with Chriſt? Was ever any Man ſo *beſide* himſelf to ſtand on ſuch terms as theſe? I would accept of, and embrace the Goſpel of Peace, but, alas! I cannot part with my *Sores* and Stench, my Chains and *Fetters*, the Plagues and Diſeaſes of my *Soul:* I would fain be as crooked, perverſe, ignorant, deformed as I have been; I know not how to part with my Dreams of Felicity, the Sweets that derive from that reliſh my Diſeaſes give them: But theſe are really the Follies of all Men who cloſe not with the Goſpel, out of *diſlike* to Goſpel-Holineſs, and Happineſs. *He that ſinneth againſt me* [*i. e.* Chriſt the Son of God] *wrongeth his own Soul; and he that hateth me, loveth Death.* Prov. 8.

CHAP. IX.

THE ſecond Doctrine I obſerve from the Text, is, That *there is in the Goſpel of Peace ſufficient furniture to maintain our peace, in our Chriſtian Courſe againſt all Encounters.*

SECT. I.

If our Feet be ſhod with the Armour of the Goſpel of Peace; let our way be fair or foul, hard or ſoft, rough or ſmooth; 'tis all one: Our Armour is of *proof*; it will either *preſerve* us from ſtrokes, or ſo abate their force, that they ſhall not *wound* us. *He ſhall give his Angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways; they ſhall bear thee up in their hands,* Pſal. 91. 11.

lest thou dash thy Foot against a Stone. This Promise is not so peculiar to Christ, but that his *Members* may apply, and take the comfort of it to themselves. Only we must take heed we go not out of *our* way, *i. e.* that way *directed* to by our God; for then we go out of God's *protection.* He never gave a good word to *Sin,* nor a Promise to us to secure us from the Evil of *Sorrow,* while we presume into the evil way of Sin. The Devil was an errant Cheat in so deceitfully reciting this Text to our Lord Jesus, as to leave out that *necessary* condition of its Blessing and Protection, [*in thy ways*]; and adding [*any time*], which brake the Hedge God made about his Promise. We must take heed of being thus fooled by him, or our selves. *Forsake her not, and she shall preserve thee*; i. e. forsake not the ways of Christ, the Divine *Wisdom*; keep them, and nothing shall be able to *break* thy Peace.

Luke 4. 10.

Prov. 4. 6.

I shall next give some account of the *Furniture* of the Gospel, with its Powers and Tendences to maintain our Peace with *Men,* with our *Selves,* with our *God.*

If all these reach the Doctrine, or the Doctrine *them,* I hope the Gospel will be a *Gainer,* and they who embrace it on *any terms,* will be no *Losers.*

And I shall consider its Tendency to Peace with Men, in its Precepts and *Rules* for prevention of *Contentions* with, or *Injuries* from them: Its Rules for our Behaviour, and supports *under* their Injuries, in the Way of our Christian Duty and Deportment: Its Tendencies to Peace with our selves, and with God.

First, *Its Precepts; a Conformity to which, highly contribute to the prevention of Contentions with, or Injuries from* Men. 1*st.*

1st. The Precepts of Righteousness and Equity to all Men do so. What is it that the Lord requires of thee O Man, but to do justly, love Mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God? The Grace of God (i. e. the Gospel of his Grace) *hath appeared to all Men; teaching us, that denying all Ungodliness and worldly Lusts, we should live Righteously, Soberly, and Godly in this World.* Mic. 6. 8.

Observe how *Righteousness*, and doing *justly*, possess the *first* place in the order of the Texts; and it may signifie that (according to the Gospel) all *other* matters of Religion or *Morals*, without Justice and Righteousness in the *front*, are but mere *Ciphers*, and stand for *nothing*. What Precepts more equitable than *render to all their due*; *Tribute to whom Tribute, Honour to whom Honour, Custom to whom Custom, Fear to whom Fear?* Rom. 13. 7.

All the Quarrels, and Injuries in the World are *pretended* at least to be for some *Wrong* done, or intended as the *Cause*. But this Precept of the Gospel *duly* put in practice, disarms Men of all just causes and pretences of breaking thy *Peace*, by causing thy Sufferings.

Secondly, That general Rule it gives, *to do unto others, what we would should be done unto us*; which is said by our Saviour to be *the Law and the Prophets, i. e.* the Sum and Substance of their *moral* Precepts, concerning the deportments of Men towards one another. This Rule conformed to, would dispose the whole World into an amicable and innocent Converse and deportment, in matters both *religious and civil*; We should see *Halcyon* days. And altho *other* Men, Men not much pretending to a *Gospel-Spirit*, are not likely to *inslave themselves* (as they

deem it) to this blessed Rule, which hath the professed Suffrage of the Light of *Nature*, yet shining thorough the Darkness of all its Corruptions; thy *apparent* conformity to it in *all* thy ways would much win upon them (tho but for shame of the World) to carry it equitably and peaceably towards thee.

Thirdly, *The Gospel obliges to a most benign, kind and beneficial carriage to all Men; both in word, deed and countenance.* By all these to express good will to all Men. *Do good to all, but especially to the Houshold of Faith.* Let the Stream of thy kindness be most abounding to them that fear God; but not so restrained by that *larger* Channel, as not to reach in *some* degree the very *worst* of Men. The Gospel Rules give no *countenance* to a morose, tetrical, humoursom, and froward Behaviour, to a *mere* selfish, close-hilled, unmerciful Temper. It obliges to all that is *worthily* obliging, not only to *Grace*, but also to *Nature*: to *whatsoever things are true*; *whatsoever things are* † *venerable*; *whatsoever things are just*; *whatsoever things are pure*; *whatsoever things are lovely*; *whatsoever things are of good report: If there be any Vertue*; *if there be any Praise*, to *think of these things.*

† Phil. 4. 8. ὅσα σεμνά

How great encouragement is given to beneficence in these Words; *Trust in the Lord, and do good, so shalt thou dwell in the Land, and verily thou shalt be fed.* Add to thy Faith Vertue, and thou shalt have *Provision* from God, and *Quiet* with Men.

I must not omit so remarkable a Passage as, *for scarcely for a righteous Man will one die, yet peradventure for a good Man some would even dare to die.* This *Goodness* will not only bind *bad* Men to their

their *good* Behaviour, but oblige *some* to suffer *for* thee, rather than *thou* shouldst suffer. If Righteousness, bare *severe* Righteousness fail of obliging Men to be peaceable toward thee, Goodness and *Benignity* may eke it out to a *sufficiency*.

Fourthly, *Not to render evil for evil.* Doing wrong is a breach of Justice; But a returning of wrong for wrong, is a breach of the Peace. 'Tis an Injury returned that makes the War. That Passage is worthy the Divine Goodness and Wisdom of the Lord Jesus: Ye have heard that it hath been said; *An Eye for an Eye, and a Tooth for a Tooth,* (Talion Law right or wrong) *but I say unto you, that ye resist not Evil*: This is not the way to *quench* the Coals of Injury, but rather by suffering Evil *patiently*: *If one smite thee on the one Cheek, turn the other to him also.* Let Men be weary of doing thee Injury, before they shall be able to provoke thee to pay them in their *own* Coin, or do any thing in a way of revenge. The Jews held it lawful to *revenge* Injuries; and many of the Heathen Philosophers in their Morals maintained it, not only to be *lawful* but *glorious*: But what the Jews accounted *innocent*, and the Heathen a Vertue; that the Gospel-Law restrains as a Vice. Mat. 5. 38, 39.

Fifthly, To carry our Climax a step higher; the Gospel obliges to *render good for evil*. *See that none render evil for evil unto any Man, but ever follow that which is good, both among your selves, and to all Men.* That of our Saviour is unparallell'd; *Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy Neighbour, and hate thy Enemy: But I say unto you, Bless them that curse you; do good to them that* 1 Thes. 5. 15.

hate you; and pray for them that persecute you, and despitefully use you. How did this kind of deportment melt the Heart of that envious and enraged *Saul* into not only desisting from his *Pursuit* of *David*, that upright and useful Servant of his; but turned his *Wrath* into *Repentance*; his *obdurate* Heart into *Tears*; and his *false* accusation into a *Confession*, that *David* was much his *better*. *Thou* (saith he) *art more righteous than I; whereas I rewarded thee evil, thou hast rewarded me good this day.* If such a deportment as this will not quench the Evil; 'tis such an one as is kindled from *Hell*.

Sixthly, *The Gospel ranks Unthankfulness, not only among the distastful, but the damnable Transgressions.* Such as a Man of any goodness toward God or Men, will not be guilty of. *Unthankful, Unholy* is its order of speaking. And sure as Unthankfulness is the most ungrateful Vice in the Eyes of God and Men, Thankfulness must needs be the most grateful and obliging.

Seventhly, It recommends to us *a publick Spirit for the Church and all Mankind.* If we have the Impression of this upon us, we shall be apparently the *Blessings* of Mankind, a publick and *common* Good. And if the Outcry against us be, as it was of the *Primitive* Christians, that we are a *publick Pest*, a Plague to the World; this publick-spiritedness will be our Compurgator, and give our Accusers the Lye, as it did theirs; and in time render us as truly *lovely*, as before we were *undeservedly* hated.

1 Cor. 12. 13.

And what is this publick Spirit, but to mind the common and *universal* Interest, and not *narrow* it to my Self, or my Family, or my Party? To be content, and choose to suffer in my own Person or Estate,

Phil. 1. 17.

that

that many may be the better for it. To be a *Christian*, and so much the more a Man as I am *more* a Christian than another. This is a Morality which the Gospel highly commends in the Apostles, and the Old Testament in *Moses*, &c. But the Blessed Son of God, whose Pattern the Gospel commends to us, as we value the worthy Name of Christian, excelled all in *this Point*; who *gave his Life a ransom for many*, and became *Man*, that he might by his Sufferings deliver us from Wrath to come, and reconcile us to God, with whom are *all our Concerns*.

Eighthly, It advises us *to mind our proper work, and not to intermeddle with the matters that belong not to us.*

The contrary to this is one of the greatest *Makebaits* in the World. Where this is practised, many a Rock of *Offence*, and provocation to Wrath is *removed*. Every Man to keep his *Place*, is an excellent way for every Man to keep his *Peace*. In order to this the Scriptures commend it as our Duty and Wisdom, from the highest to the lowest. *David*, though a great Prince, did not think he had no *bounds* to his Province: *Lord* (said he) *My Heart is not haughty, nor mine Eyes lofty; neither do I exercise my self in great matters, or in things too high for me*: He did not attempt beside his standing, nor above his understanding. Psal. 131. 1.

The Truth is, that as Disorder disturbs the March or Motions of an Army, *embroils* a Man's business, *consumes* his Estate, Body, and Soul: so whoever is the Author of it, is look't on as an *ill* Man; and a busie Body is not only a Cause, but the very Evil it self. Therefore the Apostle exhorts the Christians not to be *busie-bodies* in other Mens matters.

This

1 Pet. 4. 15. ἢ ὡς ἀλλοτριοεπίσκοπος.

This was proverbial among the *Greeks*, and to speak their Proverb in plain English, it signifies, or as Busybodys, or medlers in other Mens Concerns. There are few things more provoking to mean Men; 'tis an Invasion and Intrusion into Property, a removing the *Land-mark*: Much more, and more justly provoking is it to Princes, Magistrates and Grandees, when private Persons, and of as private parts, shall intermeddle with their *Arcana's*. To *study to be quiet*, 1 Thes. 4. 7. *and to mind our own business*, according to the Apostle's Rule, are as near of kin as Cause and *Effect*. And therefore proves this Gospel-Precept an excellent provision, for the preserving our Peace with Men.

SECT. II.

The Prudentials the Gospel furnishes us with, or allows to preserve our Peace.

I do not reckon the avoiding *downright* Sin, or that which is such *per se*; nor the necessary *indispensable* Duties themselves, which the Gospel obliges us to, among the *Prudentials* of a Christian, or within the verge of its determination. Whatever appears to be *such*, must without farther consideration be embraced, or rejected *accordingly*. If there be no avoiding of *suffering*, but at the price of *Sin* on either hand; he makes a fool's bargain, who purchases his Peace at so *dear* a rate. Prudentials ought not to determine on any consideration *whatever*: whether we shall transgress a *negative* Precept at *any* time: for that obliges *ad semper*. Though there be *a time for all things*; what is against a *negative* Precept is to be *excepted*; the Precept that forbids Murder, Uncleanness, Lying, *&c.* forbids it

it at *all times*. Neither doth Prudence reach the determination of the question of *dispositive* Duties, or *Habits* of Grace; whether we shall love God and fear him, or have a purpose and *dispositedness* to obey all his positive or affirmative Precepts, *when*, and in *what manner* they become our Duties. Nor has it to do in matters of *affirmative* Commands, when a *natural* necessity, or what is equivalent, is a restraint upon us: For 'tis a ridiculous thing to put it to the determination of Prudence, Whether he that is blind, ought to *read* the Scriptures? or he that is deaf, *hear* the Word preached? or he that is a *Prisoner*, to go to the Christian Assemblies *abroad?* or he that has not *any* thing to dispose of, should communicate Relief to others?

The question that Prudence is concerned to determine in a time of danger, is; What we may do to avoid suffering, without violating the *Rights* of God or Man? If there be any room for the *Wisdom* of the Serpent, 'tis to defend us from the suffering, and yet maintain the *Innocency* of the Dove. Mat. 10. 16.

Fifth, *The Gospel teaches, and gives a liberty to choose a lesser Evil (all things considered) for the preventing or avoiding a greater.*

But we must take this Rule, as concerning the Evils of *Affliction*, not of *Sin*. If a lesser Sin, comparatively with a greater, stand in competition; both are *absolutely* to be rejected. We must not compound one Sin for another, to do any *sinful* Evil that Good may come thereby, Good either *simply* such, or Good comparatively, *i. e.* a *lesser* Evil, is so far from our *liberty* and maintaining *Purity*, that 'tis a *Flood-gate* to Impiety, and such a blank brand as Christianity abhors. *And not rather as we be slanderously reported,*

ted, and as some affirm that we say, Let us do evil, that Good may come thereby: Whose Damnation is just.

But we may admit, and *chuse* a lesser Evil of Affliction, to avoid a *greater* of the same kind. Nature teaches to expose an *Arm* to a blow, to save the *Head*; to take Medicines, suffer Incisions, Cauterisings, *&c.* to save our Lives, or preserve, or recover health. We are exhorted by Christ himself, when persecuted in *one* City, to fly into *another*, and rather suffer a voluntary *Banishment*, than to abide the Oven's Mouth of an unmerciful, persecuting, tempting Adversary. We may preserve the liberty and safety of our Persons at the charge of our Purses. The Scriptures are so pregnant with Advices and Examples of *this* Nature, that 'tis needless to give more particulars.

Mat. 10. 23. 24. 16. Act. 27. 11.

Secondly, *We may* totally *shift and avoid a suffering, by withdrawing out of its way, when 'tis threatned by some suddain transient motion.*

Thus did our Lord himself, whose *Pattern* is an Authority equivalent to a divine Precept or *Commission. Then took they up Stones to cast at him: but Jesus hid himself, and went out of the Temple, going through the midst of them, and passed by.*

John 8. 59.

And it is fit to be observed, that this withdrawing was in the very *Act* of his preaching to the *Jews*, and from the *Temple* it self, the most *solemn*, and the *only* consecrated place of God's Worship. God doth not require us to regard our Safety so *little*, as for a bare Circumstance, to stand *obstinately* in the way of a mad Bull, or unreasonable inraged Men, who are *worse*.

Thirdly,

Thirdly, We may, and ought to order the Circumstances of Time, Place, Number, and the like, (which are alway left to human Prudence) in Religious Actions, and Duties, as may most conduce to Safety, and free us from Disturbances from Men, and our own Fears; I say, the *Circumstances*, not omit the Duties themselves altogether, or so far as to hazard the Salvation, or necessary Edification of our Souls. This is the due Construction of *Affirmative* Precepts, that they bind not at all times, *i.e.* not to be practised always; (for otherwise we must be always praying, hearing, *&c.* and confound all Duties by performing them at the same instant of Time, which is neither a Duty, nor a Possibility;) but most to Edification.

Fourthly, We may be silent as to the open *publick* Profession of some Truths, at some times, wherein it will be made a Snare. We must not at any time deny the *least* Truth; to do so is *utterly* inexcusable, from the *great* Transgression, the *presumptuous* Sin. Suppose we were in Idolatrous Pagan, or Mahometan Countries: If we take liberty to speak *some* Truths as freely as we may, and do, in *Christian* Countries; we must on no occation visit such places, but at the cost of our Lives, unless we should be defended by *Miracles*. When the Reason is the same in *other* Places, the Duty or Liberty is the same also. No Man ought to accuse *himself*. And if Men will accuse of professing necessary Truths with necessary Circumstances, as guilty of a *Capital* Crime; we may say as Christ, *If I have spoken evil, bear witness of the evil.* John 18. 23.

Fifthly, We may make use of any *good* Principles, which our Adversaries, or any of them hold in *common* with our *selves*, to conciliate their Friendship, and

and engage them to our *Security*. I confess 'tis one Expression, and sad evidence of the *Malice* that prevails in the World, that a *disagreement* in some *one* Opinion shall raise more Hatred, Enmity, and Mischief, than the agreement in an hundred shall kindle Love and Kindness. There is much of the great *Abaddon* in this, of the Destroyer of Christians, by destroying their Love; that in order to Hatred and Miseries, an Opinion, a *meer Opinion*, or peaceable Practice, contrary to our Sentiments, shall weigh so much as to render a Man unworthy our Love, Peace, or to Live: And yet many a Moral, and Evangelical Truth which he holds as we do, shall not be thought worthy to *touch* the Ballance, nor speak one good word for him. I shall cite only one Text, to speak, or rather confirm the design of this Particular. *But* Acts 23. 6, 7. *when* Paul *perceived that the one part were* Sadduces, *and the other* Pharisees; *he cryed out in the open Assembly, Men and Brethren, I am a* Pharisee, *the Son of a* Pharisee: *of the Hope and Resurrection of the Dead am I called in question.* The Issue was, the *Pharisees*, who were in that point one with him, took his part; and the *Sadduces* lost their unjust and cruel Design against the Innocent Apostle. It is no part of the Duty, or Commendation of a Christian, to be so *silly*, as not to know and promote a *just* Interest, by honest and *lawful* means. He that puts on this Furniture of *Christian* Prudence, may prevent much of that Trouble which others expose themselves unto, and might avoid without *Sin*. It were well if we knew the difference of suffering the breach of our *outward* Peace for Imprudence, from that which is for *pure* Conscience: I am sure that upon a just *Discovery*, the former cannot find so good a Security for its

its inward Peace as the latter; tho *invincible* Ignorance of the difference of the one from the other, may in *some* degree plead an *excuse*.

SECT. III.

If there be no avoiding Suffering without *Sinning*: If neither Piety nor Prudence can *secure* us, nor reconcile Men to us: Tho we cannot divert the *Blow*, we may ward it *off*, or be so well provided to *bear* its violence, that it shall not wound our *better* Part; its Irons shall not enter into our *Souls*, our inward Quiet shall abide undisturbed, *there* shall be *intire* Peace.

For this we have a Promise from him that can as easily make it good, as speak it; *When thou passest thorow the Waters, I will be with thee; and thorow the Rivers, they shall not overflow thee: when thou walkest thorow the Fire, thou shalt not be burnt, neither shall the Flame kindle upon thee.* What higher Expressions of Security in Sufferings can be imagined? And what is the Sense of all but this, that in the midst of *Dangers* they shall be *safe?* The God of the Spirits of all *Flesh* will protect their *Spirits* from being afflicted, whatever their *outward* Calamities may be. Isa. 43. 2.

Another Passage like this, and one that brings its Construction in its *Forehead*, is, *He shall deliver thee in six Troubles, yea, in seven there shall no evil touch thee.* Not only *from* Troubles, but *in* them: and how so? *No Evil shall touch thee.* Thy *better* Part shall not feel the *smart* of them; No, nor the *Snare* of them. They are indeed God's Corrections, or *Tryals:* Considered as the *former*, an afflicting Sense may be our Duty, and become Job 5. 19

become us: But considered as the *latter*, for Righteousness Sake, and the keeping a good Conscience; 'tis our Duty and *Priviledg*, to be so far from afflicted, as to be affected with Joy. The Gospel hath provided such a Guard as is sufficient; a Guard like our Glass-Windows (tho of much better Mettal) that lets in the *Light*, and keeps out the *Storm*. *Be careful in nothing, but in every thing let your Requests be made known to God by Prayer and Supplication with Thanksgiving; and the Peace of God which passeth all understanding, shall keep your Hearts and Minds through Jesus Christ.* And that this Peace, as from God, is such as is like its Name, a Security from him, a Solace to our selves in that Security, 'tis said to be passing *all understanding*, which refers to the Cause and the Effects also.

Phil. 4. 6, 7.

To the Cause: As it hath that Virtue and Power that is able to fortify to the *utmost*; which the Greek will afford a more copious Expression of, *scil. shall garison* your Hearts, *&c.* The Lord, as the Lord of Hosts, will pitch his Tents not only round about thee, but *within* thee.

φρουρήσει.

To this Effect, it is *in* and upon the *Heart and Mind:* They shall be preserved *intire*, there shall be no breaking in upon *them:* They shall not be pillaged of their Graces, or their Comforts: When all outward Peace and Comforts may be ravish'd from you, your Hearts and Minds shall be safe. And if they be safe, *all* is safe; if they be disturbed, whatever outward Blessings we possess, they are barren and fruitless. But if it be demanded, How can these things be? I answer, the Gospel hath shewed them unto us, or rather God by the Gospel, in its Furniture of Precepts, Promises, and adequate Provisions.

First,

First, Our support under our suffering, *is the well-grounded Contentment it directs and enables to.*

A Contentment with what we *have*, and without what we have *not*; and both upon desirable and possible terms. *Be content with the things that you have*, or that are *present*. Ay, may a Man say, that's easily *said*; as, *Be ye warm'd and filled*: But where shall we have the things needful to this Contentment with little or nothing, or it may be *worse* than nothing, Frowns, and Fears, and Foes, and Afflictions? The Well-Spring of this Contentment is in the next Words: The Lord put not his Servants on unreasonable or impossible things; for he hath said, *I will not leave thee, nor forsake thee.* And if there be not enough for thy present supply in God, *graciously* present with thee, Heaven it self will be barren of Contentment and Satisfaction. Ἀρκούμενοι Jam. 1. 16

This Contentment the Apostle *Paul* had actually learned in Christ's School, where every true Christian is a Scholar, and hath the same Book and Lesson as he; and the same Spirit to be his Instructer and Assister. *God forbid* (saith the same Apostle) *that I should glory, save in the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom* (or whereby) *the World is crucified to me, and I unto the World.* This was his *Experiment*, this was his *Glory*, that as the World was become without any beauty or desirableness, and but of little *use* to him; so his relish of it was as *flat*, as its taste was *insipid*; his love and desires towards it were as *dull*, low and *unactive*, as was its loveliness. And this being wrought in him by Christ, or (according to the Margin) by the *Cross* of Christ, the Cross became his *Glory*; that as it emptied him of the World, so it emptied him *to* it, and made him Phil. 4. 11. Gal. 6. 14.

well content *without* it. He was as dead to the World, as the World was to *him*: This was his Contentment and Glory, and may by *Grace* become *ours.*

Secondly, *The Satisfaction arises from having done our Duty and, maintained our Innocency.*

Such a Testimony of our Consciences is sufficient to maintain our Peace within, and such a Peace, as, like generous Wine poured out, shall sparkle with Joy: *This is our rejoycing, the Testimony of our Conscience.* Believe it, a Man's *Conscience* has more to do in the keeping or breaking a Man's *Peace* than all the World beside. 'Tis not all the plenty or security the World can advance, that can withstand the Assaults Conscience can make *against* our Peace: And that Man's Peace cannot be *low* or assaultable, whose Witness is in Heaven, his Record on high, and both copied into his own Bosom. That Expression looks big, and somewhat like the Philosopher's; *I carry my All with me. A good Man is satisfied from himself.* The Philosopher gloried in his *Vertue*, which was (according to his notion) his *own*, and none could take it *from* him. The *evangelically* good and vertuous Man has his satisfaction from his *Conscience*, witnessing his Innocency to Men, his Integrity to God. *Let every Man prove his own work, so shall he have rejoycing in himself, and not in another*; *i. e.* his Work being approved by Conscience, which is to a Man in God's *stead*: Let the World say or do what they can, it will bring forth the *genuine* Fruit of an *inward* Satisfaction.

2 Cor. 2. 12.

Pro. 14. 4.

Thirdly, *In these ways of the Gospel of Peace, a Christian avoids, and is secure against the greatest Trouble.* His

His *Sins* are pardoned, and the *Evidence* of reconciled Divine Favour shines, in all the holy Evangelical Principles that possess his *Soul*, and in the very *Paths* he walks in. That Man is blessed to whom God will not *impute* Sin; and what can tend more to make a Man a *quiet* Man, than the Contemplation of his being a *blessed* Man? How can any thing be left *behind*, where the Sting of *Death* is plucked out by the roots? Tho it may be he cannot please some *implacable* Men, God is pleased with him; for *his Countenance beholds the upright*, and then more *especially*, when they are discountenanced by Men for Righteousness sake. Psal. 11. 7 As greater Troubles swallow up the *lesser*, so their unbounded Felicity by the free Grace of God in the Redeemer, may swallow up all afflicting sense of the absence of those *lesser* Comforts, which at best are but for the present; and though they come and go as God sees good in his own Wisdom, for the *just* Designs of his *own* Glory, they will leave the Peace of God dwelling and abiding with us.

Fourthly, *The great Reward of Suffering for Christ's and Righteousness sake.*

A believing sense of this is enough to keep a Heart quiet under the most impetuous Storms of Affliction, and suppress not only our Groans, but the most secret Murmurs or Reluctancies: *Blessed are they* Mat. 5. 12. *that are persecuted for Righteousness sake; for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven.——Rejoyce and be exceeding glad, for great is your Reward in Heaven: For so persecuted they the Prophets which were before you.* A multitude of Texts of this Import are easily produced. That Christian's Sight is very dim, and his Heart more dark than the lowest *Dungeon* his present estate can be reduced unto, that cannot

not derive sufficient Consolation from all those bright Stars of *this* kind that *shine* over his Head. Certainly Believers are not made up all of Faith, and the little they have is very *idle*, when such Promises as these cannot keep them from breaking their Patience and Peace under a light Affliction. O for a Life of Faith! that's all that is wanting to *confirm* our Peace in the worst of Times, and put these words of Triumph first into our *Hearts*, and then into our *Lips*,

Gal. 3.20. *I am crucified with Christ, nevertheless I live; And the Life that I now live in the Flesh, is by the Faith of the Son of God.*

Fifthly, If all these Considerations prove not *effectual* by *moral* suasion, or as they carry in them the highest *reason*; to work a Christian walking in his Integrity into a quiet and calm Temper of Spirit: Yea, if all the Assistances of gracious Principles fall short of this end by their own Powers: There is somewhat I have yet to offer beyond them *all*; and that which all our Infirmities cannot baffle. And that is, *God* (according to his Promise) *will undertake to work this Peace where the Mind is stayed on him.* Tho it reach not the Triumph of the *Assurance* of Faith, or it is not strong enough to take fast hold of God's Strength and Truth, yet if it have but the Faith of Recumbency or Reliance; yea, but such a Faith as will keep it resolved from departing from God, he has ingaged to keep such a Soul in Peace, in *perfect Peace.* Thou *wilt keep him in* perfect *Peace, whose Mind is*

Isa. 26. 3. *stayed on thee, because he trusteth in thee.* The *God of Peace* has engaged to keep that Soul in *Peace*, who embraces the *Gospel* of Peace; yea, who embraces it sincerely, tho with much weakness.

Now

Now, let the worst come to the worst: If (in thy Christian Course) all those holy, harmless, benign, obliging Deportments towards the Adversaries of Evangelical Holiness, which the Gospel directs and assists thee in, cannot make their hard Hearts *relent*, their Bowels express some Pity toward thee: If all thy Christian Prudentials cannot put by the *designed* blow, but it lights and lies *heavy* on thee: Yet there is a reserve *within* thy self, or with thy *God*, that will secure thy *Peace* under all their *Pressures*. *But we have this Treasure in Earthen Vessels, that the excellency of the Power may be of God, and not of us. We are troubled on every side, but not distressed; We are perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed: Alway bearing about in our Body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the Life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our Body.*

SECT. IV.

The Gospel Furniture, for preserving a Man's Peace with himself.

I am not now to consider Peace in *general*, or as within our selves as the Subject and *Seat* of it, but Peace *with* our selves, *i. e.* a Peace between those Faculties and Powers of the Soul, which are each of them apart of our selves; and also of the *same* faculty with it *self*. For not only the Judgment and Will, the Conscience and Affections may be at a jar one with *another*, but also the Judgment it self may not only hesitate, but militate with it self. *I am in a straight betwixt two* (saith the Apostle) first to determine which is best (all Circumstances conside-

red) secondly, and consequently, which to choose. This Contest and Counter-acting may be found in the Conscience, Will, and all the Affections upon divers scores, not now intended to be handled: But there is that in the *Gospel of Peace*, which, though it do not, yea ought not to *restrain* all those Agitations, that sometimes counter-ballance, and give check to one another, and in the same faculty, yet it provides so, as notwithstanding to preserve the peace and tranquillity of a Man with himself, so as those counter-Motions shall make no Disturbance or Disquiet to him.

What this Furniture is, is the next question to be resolved, and that which answers the Design of *this* Section.

First, *There is a sufficient clearness of Light in the Gospel, to determine and fix us aright in our main Concerns.*

To be undetermined in our *main* Concerns (whatever prospect we have of other things) exposes us to storms *within* from the Contentions of the greatest Competitors that can have to do with us, or we with them. When the Judgment, Understanding, Will, *&c.* shall have the question agitated by them in earnest; Whether God or the *World*, the Flesh or the Spirit, Time or *Eternity* shall have the ascendant in our Hearts and Lives? The Issues of these things, or of such like import, are so *momentous* and weighty, as it may well put a Man upon the *wrack*. But when these things are adjusted and fixed, all other things are comparatively indifferent. So that, though every thing is to be considered, chosen, affected with a Christian Discretion, yet the Passions or Affections have no just provocation

tion to be ſtirred up to ſo *high* a Ferment, or our Impreſſions to be ſo deep and piercing, as to diſturb our Peace.

A ſufficient proof of this we have in the Animoſities that are in the World in the Concerns of *Religion*, beyond thoſe which derive from diverſities of Opinions in Philoſophy, Medicine, or ſuch Arts and Sciences as touch not Religion, or the Concerns of the Soul with God, and for Eternity. The reaſon is plain; becauſe the one ſort make no pretence to our *main* Concerns, which the other doth, as carrying our eternal Life or Death in *their* Hands. And though our Inſtance be of diſquietneſs *abroad*, of Men one againſt *another*, yet all *ariſes from thoſe Luſts that war in our Members*, and often act the ſame part among themſelves. Having ſaid thus much to clear our way, I ſhall ſay ſomewhat of the ſufficiency of *Evangelical* Light, to help us to determine and *fix* in our main Concerns. Jam. 4. 1.

Two great things, yea the greateſt of all other, the Goſpel-Light *ſufficiently* determines.

Firſt, *That the knowledge and injoyment of, and conformity to God is our chiefeſt and only ſatisfying Good.*

The knowledge of and conformity to God are eſſential to the enjoyment of him. The Evangelical Light of the Scriptures do ſo plainly diſcover theſe, that he that runs may read them, if he attend to it. I will inſtance in a few Texts; *Acquaint thy ſelf with him and be at peace, ſo ſhall good come unto thee*: Peace the ſummary of all Good ſhall be thine, if thou ſo know God, as to injoy free and friendly Converſe with him. *My Puniſhment is greater than I can bear*, ſaid *Cain*. *And from thy Face ſhall I be hid.* It Job 22. 21. Gen. 4. 13, 14.

seems, that Sin and Lust had not yet so far blotted out the Truth of Man's Happiness, consisting in the *injoyment of God*; but that some *notions* and *sense* of it did abide in so bad a Man as *Cain*, or at least was restored by the Gospel, as it was revealed in those *early* days.

Exod. 33. 18.

And he (Moses) said, I beseech thee shew me thy Glory. The Lord had signified to his Servant *Moses* in the verse next foregoing, the special Favour he had for him: *Thou hast found Grace in my sight, and I know thee by name.* In the contemplation of this, *Moses* proposes to himself the highest improvements of so great a Favour; and this he pitches on, and no other, as that which includes all other, as that which reached the topmost and highest Point of Man's Blessedness; *I beseech thee shew me thy Glory.*

Ps. 17. 15.

I will behold thy Face in Righteousness, I shall be satisfied when I shall awake with thy Likeness. Here is all in one Text, the Knowledg and Injoyment of God in a state of Conformity to him, is a satisfying Good.

Mat. 5. 8.

Blessed are the pure in Heart, for they shall see God.

1 Joh. 3. 2.

I shall add but one more: *Beloved, now are we the Sons of God, but it doth not yet appear what we shall be, but we know that when he shall appear we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is.* This is our present Satisfaction, that we know by the Light of the *Gospel* that the time will come that we shall have a satisfying Vision of God. So far as this great Truth is *embraced*, there remains no more litigants in that great claim. Motions and suggestions may arise in a good and honest Heart, that carry a Contradiction to this blessed Evidence, but they are but as a few Straglers of a routed Army.

Secondly,

Secondly, *The Gospel clearly determines the way to this Blessedness and Satisfaction.*

Men may sully and darken its Evidence, by straining their Wits to make it *seem* to countenance their Sin and Worldly Interests; that licentiousness or looseness that is so *dear* to them, or that Pride and Vanity of Mind that some Men are *too fond* of: But if Men would come to the Gospel-Light with good and *honest* Hearts, and instead of an Industry, to narrow their Duty with an Enquiry, how little may we do, and yet be saved? To enquire only with St. *Paul*; *Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?* The way to the Injoyment of our chiefest Good would be much more clear, though it may be not *all so wide*, as some Men must have it, or *perish*.

What does the Gospel speak more *clearly*, than Reconciliation to God by Jesus Christ, Justification by his Blood, Sanctification by his Spirit unto Obedience, and that Faith which embraces all these, and goes to God by Christ *alone* as the *Mediator* of the new Covenant? *No Man comes to the Father but by me: There is one Mediator between God and Man, the Man Christ Jesus. Being justified by Faith, we have Peace with God through the Blood of his Cross. Faith without Works is dead. Elect through Sanctification of the Spirit unto Obedience, and sprinkling of the Blood of Jesus Christ.* ——— *Grace and Peace unto you*, &c. These things are so easily understood, as were it not for some heavy *bias*, that Prophecy would pass for performed *long* since. *And an High-Way shall be there, and a Way, and it shall be called the Way of Holiness: The unclean shall not pass over it, but it shall be for those, the wayfaring Men, though* Fools, *shall not err therein.* Joh. 14. 6. 1 Tim. 2. 5. Isa. 35. 8.

Secondly,

Secondly, The Goſpel excludes *double-mindedneſs, and directs to the making God our ſole ultimate End, and all other things ſubordinate to him.*

They who would have God, and the Happineſs which is in his *Favour*, and yet are as much *reſolved* to have the World, and gratify their *Luſts* too, create to themſelves an inextricable Labyrinth of *Contradictions* and Troubles. The way of this Bleſſedneſs, and that of Sin, never lie together. The way of this Bleſſedneſs, and that of the *otherwiſe lawful* injoyments of the World, often *part*. What ſhall the *double-minded* Man do? How ſhall he agree with *himſelf* in this caſe? He cannot be ſatisfied without both, and *both* he cannot have. His Affections are ſet on things *above*, and things on the Earth alſo. Will not this *cruciate* his Soul, tear his Thoughts, Affections and Contentments aſunder, and ſet them together by the Ears about their divided and contrary Intereſts? Will not that Man go forward and *backward*, ſometime in God's Way, and by and by he breaks over the *Hedge? A double-minded Man is unſtable in all his ways.* He aims at God and the World, injoys neither, no nor *himſelf*. Where, according to the Goſpel-Rule, the Aim is *ſingle* and ſincere for God; all things that tend to that holy and happy End, are in a *ſtraight* Line, are at an Agreement among *themſelves*; their Way lies *together* in a happy Concord. The Soul that has but that one *principal* Mark, may preſs forward towards it in a *peaceful* Order. *If thine Eye be ſingle, thy whole Body ſhall be full of Light: But if thine Eye be evil* (i. e. double) *thine whole Body ſhall be full of Darkneſs.* Errour and Diſtraction will poſſeſs the *Head*, where contraries poſſeſs the *Heart*: But clearneſs of Underſtanding,

Jam. 1. 8.

ſtanding, Contentment, and Comfort are the Companions of a Soul *ſincerely* diſpoſed for God, the one and only *due* End.

I will add one *notable* Inſtance of him who came to Chriſt with a *Good Maſter! What good Thing ſhall I do, that I may have Eternal Life?* Here he ſeems a *ſingle-ey'd* Man, that aim'd at the *one* thing neceſſary, and would ſpend all the Arrows in his Quiver to hit *that* Mark: But when all came to all, a latent Love, *abſolute* prevailing Love to the World diſcovers it ſelf: *Sell that thou haſt, and give to the poor, and come and follow me*, was too hard a Bargain, too great a Price for Treaſure in *Heaven*: He parts with Chriſt and Treaſure in *Heaven* for his Treaſures on *Earth*, yet with ſo little *ſatisfaction*, that it was a ſorrowful *parting*: *He went away ſorrowful*: Whereas, had he had the ſingle Aim of *Zacheus*, he had parted freely with the World, for the Embraces of Chriſt and Heaven, and rejoyced at ſo happy a lot.

Mat. 19. 16. *v.* 21. *v.* 22.

Thirdly, *The Goſpel diſcovers and commends to us all Goodneſs, Vertue, and neceſſary Truth, without mixture of Evil or Error.*

All Goodneſs, Vertue and Truth are at peace among themſelves. There can be no Diſcord between one Truth and another, one Vertue and another.

So far as Truth and Goodneſs have the *Dominion*, there will be Peace: and ſo far as the Goſpel is underſtood and *embraced*, they will be *uppermoſt*. It is not ſo with *Error*, Ignorance, *Vice* and Sin; They are at variance among *themſelves*: One Error contrary to *another*, one Luſt contrary to *another*: And he who ſerves *them*, and follows their Conduct with greateſt *fervor*, is like to be the moſt *unhappy* Man, as

as they separate him farthest from Peace with *God* and with *himself*.

Two *Titles* are ascribed to Christ and his King-
Heb. 7. 1. dom; *Melchisedec King of Salem*. *Melchisedec* which is here put for a *proper* Name, is a compound Word, and signifies *King of Righteousness*. If the Hebrew of the Title, *King of Salem*, had been also *retained*, it would have been *Melech-Salem*; and both interpreted, *King of Righteousness, and King of Peace*. Sure I am Jesus Christ, bears no empty Names or Titles. And these *now* considered carry this Truth in their *Fore-heads*; that where Righteousness has the *Dominion*, Peace will be the blessed *Issue*; wherever 'tis extended, to *without* us, or *within* us, to others, or our selves.

'Tis said, *Col.* 1. 13. *Who hath delivered us from*
Col. 1. 13. *the Power of Darkness, and hath translated us into the Kingdom of his dear Son*. The *Power* of Darkness, which is, either the Devil, or those *Lusts* by which he prevails, or rather both: 'Tis called a *Power*; that to which we are translated, a *Kingdom*: The one being a meer unrighteous *Force*, that which can plead no Right, or *Authority from God*, or pure Nature. 'Tis a perfect mischievous Tyranny, full of Error, Confusion, Contradiction and Fear: They who are Slaves to this Tyranny, must needs be alway quarrelling with *themselves*: But a *Kingdom* (and a Kingdom of *the dear Son of God* especially) is a State of Law, Righteousness, Order, Common-good and Tranquillity, and therefore desireable and *peaceable*.

Fourthly, So far as the Gospel of Peace is embraced, *The Understanding, Conscience and Will are agreed, and have a peaceful Harmony in the same Subject*.

They

They are all regulated by that *Law*, which most effectually and infallibly answer to the righteous Ends of God, his own Glory, and the pure natural, and rational Ends of Man, his *consummate* Good: This is Peace, *pure* Peace.

All these Faculties are part of our selves; but where Truth prevails on the Judgement, Conviction moves the Conscience, and stubborn Opposition possesses the Will, how can that Man be at peace with himself? There is certainly the most domestick, intestine, unnatural War that can be imagined: The Judgment directs the Conscience, the Conscience first commands the Will, and upon its Opposition, or *Rebellion rather*, it discharges all its Artillery against that and the Man *himself*, whose Will is thus obdurate. Conscience flashes Hell into the Soul like so many Granadoes or Fireballs, breeds the *knawing* Worm there that never dies, till Conversion; or Conscience tired and fallen asleep, or so often *baffled* as to desist from farther Attempts: But if it come to this *last*, the Condition of that Man is so much the more desperate, and next door to that of a Reprobate. Tell me then in sober sadness, if the Gospel understood, and embraced into the Possession of the whole Soul, is not a blessed Mean to that Peace with our *selves*, which, next to that with God, is our greatest Concern?

To apply it more particularly: 'Tis hard for them that converse with the Gospel (except Atheism or desperate Hardness of Heart have gotten the ascendant) not to be convinced that there is a God, that God is the God of Peace, that Obedience to the Gospel is the high-way to Peace with God and eternal Life: But if the Will and Affections maintain the

the *contrary*, and rebel against *this Light*, this Light turns to *Fire* in the *Bosom*, it wounds the Soul, and makes those Breaches as let out all its Peace, without which Life it self is not worth continuing. Thou knowest better things than thou dost love or *live*; every step thou takest Conscience meets thee with a sore Rebuke, and tells thee no Man goes this way and *lives*. Conscience neither fears nor spares thee. But when once thou beareſt a *respect*, a *sincere* powerful respect to all the Evangelical Law; and thy Judgment, Conscience and Will are under its Conduct; all of them conspire to a sweet Calm, a holy Serenity under the Shines of God's Countenance, and well-grounded Evidences of the Uprightness of thy Heart, and the Goodness of thy *State*.

Rom. 1. 18.

Fifthly, *The Gospel obliges us to a Resignation of our Judgments to the Divine Wisdom, and our Wills & Affections to the Divine Will, revealed in the Scriptures.*

If the Light of *Nature*, corrupted by the *Fall*, was so far *benighted*, that *the World by Wisdom knew not God*; but did as it were *feel* (or grope) *after him*, as Men without either Eyes or Light; what certainty in matters Divine or Spiritual could be expected from it? How unfruitful, and consequently how *unpeaceable* would all our Agitations be, in quest of those Truths that most concerned us? Whereas now by the Light of the Gospel, we have the Umpirage of the Divine Wisdom and Veracity. All we have to consider, is duly to understand the *true* Sense of the *written* Word, which is the *Oracles* of God. There is sufficient in his *ipse dixit* to determine all Controversies, solve all Difficulties, answer all Objections, fix the Mind upon that Rock of Truth, which is as firm and as stable as its Author.

1 Cor. 1. 21.

Acts 17. 27.

Psal. 119. 99.

And

And though the right Understanding of the Sense of *some* Texts of holy Writ hath been a Bone of so much Contention and *Mischief* in the Church; 'tis not to be imputed to the *Obscurity* of the Text in *momentous* Matters at least, such as are necessary to *Salvation*: But to the Pride and *corrupt* Interests that Men *first* espouse, and then cruciate the Scriptures to serve those Lusts, with the Sanction of a *Divine* Authority. When the Christian World shall become honest, humble, heavenly and peaceable; the Scriptures will not only be better *practised*, but also much more easily understood, and Men shall see *eye to eye* their true meaning.

If we consider the resignation of our Will's and Affections to the Divine Will; we shall find it *equally* contributing to Peace with *our selves*, with that resignation of our Understandings and Opinions to the Divine *Wisdom*.

There is indeed no Peace with our selves in any thing short of this Method, and this will reach it *infallibly*. Experience proves that Children left to their *own Wills* and Appetites, are of all others the most froward and troublesom to others, and themselves also. That *Liberty* of Will proves the greatest *Bondage* and Torment. Therefore Parents, in reference to the Childrens Good and Quiet, take it to be not only their Authority, but the genuine Fruit of *Parental* Love, to subdue their Childrens Wills to an *absolute* Subjection to their Command; 'till they have their own Reason grown up to some competency to govern themselves. Prov. 22. 15.

But when they are risen to a Freedom from parental Tutelage, is all then secure? is there no danger of brutish *self-disturbing* and self-destroying Passions? Far

Job 11.12. Far otherwise: Nothing more blind, heady, ungoverned than Man left to himself. But suppose that at mature Age he betake himself to a comporting with the Wills of *others*; this will but increase his *Difficulty* and Torment. If he pleases *one*, he shall displease *others*. One Man *wills*, another *nills* the same thing; and 'tis so with Men of *equal* repute for *Wisdom*. Ignorance, Conceit, Humour, Custom, Interest, inslave almost all Mankind, and bias them from the *true* and straight Measures of Truth and Goodness: So that a Man that has any Care of his *own* Concerns, had need put the question, whether *he* or *they* to whose Advice or Authority he commits his *Will*, betray him not to some greater Evils than meer Inconveniences, from the taint of some one or *more* of the above-named Biasses? But if he do so, I am in a dream waking, if he increase not his Perplexities, and tempt himself to let loose the Reins of his Fancy, or sit down altogether unconcerned in the matters of God and his *Soul*, whatever he may do as to the Concerns of this World. But the Will, and Affections resigned to the Will and Conduct of God and the Redeemer, hath all the *Security* imaginable. There can be no Ignorance in Wisdom it self, nor Design to *deceive* in Truth and Faithfulness it self. God hath not, nor *can* have any *Ends* to serve upon us, for he needs nothing out of *himself*: Nor can there be any Addition to Perfection. All that God pretends to from us, is his own Glory: and to render him that is, not only most agreable to *pure* Humanity, and becoming his Creature; but by the Divine *Grace* is made inseparable from our *own* Good. And as ill as the Behaviour of *faln* Man has been towards his God; the Gospel of Christ

Christ hath its whole Design and Tendency written in its Fore-head; *Glory to God in the highest, Peace on Earth, good Will towards Men.* Luk. 2. 14.

To conclude, I will appeal to the Experiences of all that have trusted God, so far as to *try* him by this holy Resignation of their whole Soul to his Wisdom and Will, if they have not found their Peace with *themselves*, thrive or *languish* according to their Sincerity in this Resignation.

Sixthly, *The Gospel above all things explodes designed Hypocrisy.*

The designed Hypocrite aims at deluding *others*, by Simulation and Dissimulation, *i. e.* by putting on an *appearance* of what he is *not*, and by hiding from others what he *really* is: Thus his Inside and *Outside* are at the highest jarr and disagreement. Now as the whole Masque of an Hypocrite is a mere piece of *Art* and Juggle, an Appearance that ariseth not from inward *spontaneous* Principles; 'tis matter of continual Pain and Care to maintain and carry on this *Imagery*: And if it be done so like the Truth and *Life*, that, as the Disciples of Christ, every one will suspect himself rather than this *Judas*; yet in the mean time his *Heart* reproaches him, his Conscience that sees *all*, and is under no Temptation to Fear or Flattery, casts in his Teeth, that all his painted laboured *outside*, is but Sham and *Illusion*. Beside all this, he finds it a hard Task to carry on the Cheat *long* without discovery; and in the mean time his Guilt puts him in continual Fear, that he is detected, and that others suspect what he knows of himself to be *too true*. Thus the Hypocrite has no Peace *in*, no agreement *with* himself.

But a sincere, upright and free Soul, which the Gospel so much commends, doth not pace it in *Trammels*, needs no Paint nor Peruque, may spare all those *troublesom* Artifices. Let but the *renewed* Nature, the Love and Fear of God, the living Principles of Grace that are *within*, have their free course; and the outward Countenance of the Conversation will *naturally* and easily be formed a Saint, a holy, blameless, lovely, divine thing. *The King's Daughter is all glorious within, and her Raiment is of embroidered Gold.* Ps. 45. 13. The outside of a sincere Christian agrees to the inside, but is somewhat the worse of the *two*. Our Lord *Jesus Christ* advises, to *wash the inside of the Cup or Platter, that the outside may be clean also*; *i. e.* cleanse the Spring, and *that* will cleanse the Stream, make the Stream like it *self* without more ado: two works are done in *one*; whereas the Hypocrite cleansing the *outside only*, acts but the labour in vain, and is still like the garnished Sepulchre, fair *without*, but the inside full of stench and *rottenness*. Mat. 23. 26.

SECT. V.

The Gospel furnishes us with a sufficiency to maintain our Peace with God. This it doth three ways: First; It furnishes us with a Covenant of Peace with God, whose Terms are *the sincere Obedience of Faith*. If fallen Man had been set upon his Legs *again*, and every Individual made a Candidate for his *own* Perfection in fulfilling the Law of *Works*: But, he *not continuing in all things that are written in the Law to fulfil it*, must have fallen under the *Curse*; his Market had been but little *amended*. Our secu-

rity

rity of our firſt Parent, in whoſe ſtanding or falling *He* and all his *Poſterity* were concerned; was more *likely* to ingage his Perſeverance than our Concern only for our *ſingle* ſelves.

But the Goſpel hath provided better things for us: For though we are defective in our Duty, ſubject to many Infirmities, ever and anon making falſe Steps, yet while our Eyes are ſingle, our Aims ſincere to pleaſe God in all things, God is pleaſed with us, our Peace is kept with him, *His Countenance beholds the upright.* Pſ. 11. 7.

Secondly; In caſe of wilful, known Tranſgreſſions, which the Pſalmiſt calls the preſumptuous Sin, the *great* Tranſgreſſion, which indeed lays our Peace a *bleeding*; True *Evangelical* Repentance renewes the Soul to its Integrity in it *ſelf*, and its Peace with *God. If we confeſs our Sins, he is faithful and juſt to forgive us our Sins, and to cleanſe us from all Unrighteouſneſs.* God's Juſtice to Chriſt's Purchaſe, and his Faithfulneſs to his own *Promiſe* oblige him to *Forgiveneſs*, and all is *Peace* again between him and us. No ſooner *David* ſaid, I have ſinned, but *Nathan* by commiſſion from God and in his Name anſwered; *The Lord hath alſo put away thy Sin.* And that every true Penitent ſhall meet with the ſame relief; the Pſalmiſt gives us his *own* experience, with what hope others ought to raiſe from thence. *I acknowledged my Sin unto thee, and mine Iniquity have I not hid; I ſaid I will confeſs my Tranſgreſſions unto the Lord, and thou forgaveſt the Iniquity of my Sin. Selah. For this ſhall every one that is godly, pray unto thee in a time when thou mayeſt be found: Surely in the Floods of great Waters, they ſhall not come nigh unto him.* Bleſſed 1 John 1. 9. 2 Sam. 15. 13. Pſal. 32. 5, 6.

Terms of maintaining Peace with God! That no sooner Repentance has gone so far as a *real Purpose*, but God will meet the humbled Soul with an answer of *Peace*.

This was not the manner of the Law of Works: for there was *no place* for Repentance: Its *Severity* rendred the *first* Fault to be *Death* without *Remedy*.

Thirdly; *The Interest in the Son of God, as our Advocate at his Right Hand.*

This blessed God-man is ascended and seated a Lieger and *Stationary* at the Right Hand of his Father, for this very end; *There he everliveth to make Intercession for us.* Indeed the Gospel with all its *Priviledges*, leaves us in *this* World to a *Necessity* of such a Friend in the *Court* of Heaven: But such a faithful and *effectual* Friend he is, that an *upright* Soul may live at *Hearts* ease in this World, for all it needs fear of a breach with God. *If any Man sin,* 1 Joh. 2. 1. *we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.*

This blessed *Advocate* is concerned in the execution of that Office, principally for three things: First, to obtain *assisting* Grace, that we may not fall into Sin. Secondly, *Restoring* Grace, that we may be recovered out of the Snare of the Devil. Thirdly, *Pardoning* Grace, that we may have the same Smiles of God's Face, the same *delightful* Converse with him, and the same plentiful Communications from him.

All that has been said (though short, *exceeding* short of what is *real* Truth, *revealed* Truth in this matter) may be abundantly sufficient to *confirm* that great Gospel-truth. That *there is sufficient Furni-*

ture

ture in the Gospel, to maintain our Peace in our Christian Course against all Encounters. That which remains will be to consider, what this Doctrine teaches, and obliges to the belief and practise of.

CHAP. X.

THE Improvement of the *abovenamed Doctrine.*

First; This Doctrine teaches us to understand two things: 1. *Who they are, that are like to hold on in a Christian Course.* Not all *certainly* that make a Profession of Christianity: Alas, how many such are there that go to the War without their Armour, yea, that never entred the Lists of a Spiritual Combat, nor came within the reach of the *Cross* of Christ, nor ever yet *intended* it.

But for those whom the Cross and other Temptations assault, but they are either without any Armour at all, of God's appointment or preparing; what can be expected from them, but to be overtaken and prevailed on by the Temptation? and that is the *Evil*, the *Snare* of it.

There are yet another sort of Persons, who neither eat, nor drink, nor sleep, nor move, nor live, without this *Armour on*: Their *Feet shod with the Preparation of the Gospel of Peace.* These are the Persons (if we could but know them) that are like to *hold on their way*; to whom the *worst* of Godliness will be no *loss*, but *great Gain*: Who may challenge and defie all Adversaries and Adversities in the Terms of the Apo-

Rom. 8. 35, to the end. stle, *Who shall separate us from the Love of Christ? Shall Tribulation, or Distress, or Persecution, or Famine, or Nakedness, or Peril, or Sword?* —— *Nay in all these things we are more than Conquerors through him that loved us.* The same strain of a holy well-grounded *Triumph* of Faith, reaches to the End of the Chapter.

Then they are much mistaken, who take a Life of Godliness upon the Terms of following Jesus Christ, and living in the Ordinances and Truths of the Gospel at all seasons, to be an intolerable and unreasonable thing. Did Jesus Christ send his Servants as Beasts to the Shambles, run them on the Point of Temptations without a sufficient *Security* to their *greatest* Concerns; did he send them on a Warfare at their *own* Charges, and put them upon Impossibilities; did he propose to them those Rewards that were hopeless and desperate; there might be *some* Pretence for such sad and discouraging Censures of the holy Ways of Jesus Christ: But these Pretences are all out of doors. No Man was ever lost in God's Way, nor a Loser by it. The Ways of Wisdom

Pro. 3. 17. *are Pleasantness, and all her Paths are Peace.*

None are of the above-nam'd bad Opinion, but such as know not God; such who are unacquainted with the Gospel, or have made no tryal of it in good *earnest*. If the *Flesh* were to undertake the Task of *Religion*, or a willing Mind left to its own *feeble* Powers, the best of us all would *sink* under its weight: But let us up and be doing what Christ *commands*, and have open Hands and Hearts to his Comforts and Reliefs; then we shall say and feel,

Mat. 11. 30. that *his Yoak is easy, and his Burden is light.*

This

This Doctrine in the second place is of reproof, and First *to those who esteem of the Profession of Gospel-holiness and Practice of it in others so far as it goes, to be but Hypocrisy; because they cannot find in their hearts to go to the charge of it themselves.*

Judg Righteous Judgment. Do not measure all by your selves. If they had neither a *renewed* Nature, that renders those things agreeable, and a Pleasure to them that are *contrary* and painful to you; or that they had not this blessed *Furniture* of Grace and Peace: you might more *rationally* pass this Judgment on them. Wonder as long as you will, when you see a dead Man walk and work; or call it no natural thing but a mere *Artifice:* but if you will by no means be reconciled to the Belief, that a living Man who hath Principles of sense and motion, should feel and move accordingly, question your living a *rational*, rather than their living an *Evangelical* Life. And although you may have made some irregular *Essayes* to taste and relish that Spiritual Food which carries in it their *Nourishment*, and meets their Taste with an unexpressible *Delight*, and have made some short Attempts to use *their* Armour, but all without the *Effects* they profess the Experiment of: Ask your selves again, if Life and natural Heat do not first warm the Apparel, before that can maintain Warmth to the Body? If a dead Man can taste and relish the best prepared *Viands*, or put on, and use to *purpose* the most approved Armour? Let your State be first changed, by being renewed in the Spirit of your Minds; become God's Workmanship in Christ Jesus; and then you will be *created* to all these good Works, and have Faculties and Powers disposed to do, suffer, and enjoy like a Christian.

Secondly, It reproves those Professors of the Gospel, who *are so far from Peace, that they shame the Gospel, as if its Furniture were not of Proof to obtain and maintain inward Peace.* The holy Psalmist in one Instance of Defectiveness in this Peace, chides his own Soul, and gives it better advice; *Why art thou cast down, O my Soul? why art thou disquieted within me?* Hope thou in God, for I shall yet praise him *for the help of his Countenance.* A cheerful exact Holiness is the great Glory of the Gospel; and an invincible Evidence that 'tis the Gospel of *Peace.* We find when the Spies sent from the *Israelitish* Camp to search out the Land of *Canaan*, they brought back a *bad* Report of the Land, and all from a *base* Fear; thereby they brought up a bad Report of the *Promise* of God, and the Character he had given of it as a Land flowing with Milk and Honey. They said it was a Land that *eateth up its Inhabitants*, instead of *feeding* them with Plenty and *Dainties*: A Land wherein were the *Anakims*, *terrible* Men: And it was not so easy a matter, as that going up and possessing it was all they had to do; they must fight for it, and fight against such, before whom they were no more able to *stand*, than a *Grasshopper* before a Man. Little was God, his Word, or his People beholden to these Men.

Pf. 42. 5.

Numb. 13. 31, 32, 33.

But there are another sort of Men whom this Doctrine highly commends: And they are *such as give credit and reputation to this Truth, by living like it:* Such an one was *Caleb*; *But my Servant Caleb had another Spirit with him*: And what was that but a Spirit agreeing to the Promise of God? *And Caleb still'd the People before Moses, and said, let us go up at once and possess it, for we are well able to overcome it:*

Numb. 14. 24.

He

He tells them that thoſe Giants were but *Meat for them*; he repreſents God like himſelf, and the Promiſe, ſuch as became God, *a very Truth.* Such another was the Apoſtle *Paul*, *None of theſe things move me*, &c. His Mind was neither removed from his Duty, nor moved in its Peace and Tranquillity. One or two ſuch Heroes live more *Credit* to the Goſpel, than a thouſand faint-hearted, unbelieving, fleſh-pleaſing Profeſſors. Acts 20. 24.

The third Improvement ſhall be for exhortation; Firſt, to the *Unregenerate*; Secondly, to the *Regenerate.*

To the Unregenerate firſt, *Do not think it will be to your Loſs, to embrace the Goſpel in all the Laws of it.*

Do not let the pains-taking, the Adverſaries, the Adverſities that attend Goſpel-integrity, diſcourage you. It hath Proviſion for your Peace, notwithſtanding *all theſe.* If you cannot have a Freedom *from* Trouble, you may have Peace *in* Trouble, and this is better, and your Peace *greater: Nay in all theſe things we are more than Conquerors.* Conquerors overcome their Enemies, and diſable them from *afflicting*; but the truly Evangelical Soul overcomes by ſuffering, and overcomes the Suffering it *ſelf* by Faith and Patience. O begin to truſt God in good earneſt: Let not the Pleaſures of the Fleſh tempt you to make God a Liar any longer: Do not ſooth up your ſelves in a *falſe* Opinion that you *truſt* in God, till you dare to *try* him, by reſolving effectually to live *godly in Chriſt Jeſus.* Rom. 8.

Secondly, *Bewail your Sin and Folly in ſeeking Peace where God hath ſaid, and all Mens experience has proved that there is none.*

O what Folly and Perverseness is this! to hope against Hope, to persist in an Opinion against the *Uniform Contradictions* of all Men, in all Ages: And yet not to seek Peace, where never any sought it *duly*, but first or last they *have* or *shall* find it.

This Doctrine exhorts those who are *regenerate*, and have *sincerely* embraced the Gospel of Peace, first, *to live like the Gospel of Peace.*

Let your Lives be a due Representation of the Gospel, as that whose Furniture is sufficient to preserve your Souls in Peace against all Encounters in your *Christian* Course. Do not tempt others to *believe* there is no such *Vertue* in the *due* Improvement of the Gospel by your *unquiet* Spirits under *Afflictions*, and too often without any Temptation but your *unquiet Hearts.* That Physician and his Medicines are not likely to have many Admirers, whose Patients appear little or nothing the better, except a verbal Commendation of his Skill, and the Excellency of his Remedies. 'Tis a great shame and Scandal that those Professors of the Gospel cast upon it, that have their Peace no better *secured* against Assaults, than *theirs* who make none or but small pretensions to any serious Acquaintance with the Gospel, or any such high Opinion of it.

I have had much ado to forbear downright chiding some high Professors, who upon a cross Providence in the Concerns of this World, loss of dear Relations, Reflections upon their Reputations, Distempers in their Bodies, Apprehensions of Trouble in and for the Ways of Truth and Godliness, shew as great or greater Distempers and Passions, than those who know no other Supports than mere *natural* Fortitude. What do these more than others?

What

What do these but reduce the Profession of the Gospel to that *low Ebb*, which Stoicism was charged with, that for all its great Looks made no difference between its Disciples and others, but only this, that they could talk more gloriously?

Secondly, Do not go out of God's Way to provide for your Peace.

If you are not secure *there*, you can be secure no where: Be ashamed to trust to your own Prudence, rather than to God's Promise, who will lay out Heaven and Earth and all his infinite Perfections, rather than be worse than his Word. If you run away from your God and leave his Tents, you must leave your Armour behind you, and expose your selves naked to your Adversaries Weapons. God hath promised to keep thy Peace *in* his ways, but not out of them.

While you are in God's Ways, put on and keep on his Armour; live continually in the *due* use of it. Eph. 6. 11: 'Tis not having it in your Bibles or Heads, but in your Hearts that will bless you with its Peace: It is Spiritual Armour: In your Spirits it must have its Magazine, on your Spirits it must be worn, and sit as near you as your Skin to your Back, and as the Quality adheres to its *Subject*. By your Spirits assisted by God's it must be managed for this *great* Service.

The third Doctrine I gave you from the Text, was, that in order to preserving our Peace by the Armour of God, we must put it on; and also every Piece of Armour in its right place, according to the Text therefore; *Let your Feet be shod with the Preparation of the Gospel of Peace.*

I shall add only four Directions how this Preparation, which I have so largely insisted on, may be useful to you, and conclude this Subject.

First, Faith must be kept up in its strength. Tho it be a principal Part of the Christian's Armour by it self, yet 'tis a large share in all the rest; yea, all the rest will lie by dead and useless, but as invigorated by Faith. And indeed 'tis therefore called the *Shield*, which covers and is applicable to all the Parts of the Body, from Head to *Foot*. Our Saviour said to the blind Men, *Be it to you according to* Mat. 9. 28. *you Faith* imperatively: I may say indicatively every Part of your Spiritual Armour will prove as the Faith is whereby you use it. The Promises and Doctrines of the Scripture, though intitled truely from God, can have no more Power with us, than Faith, which is the *Gift* of God too, gives to them.

Secondly, Let the Word of God dwell richly in you in all Wisdom.

The more rich you are in the indwelling Word of God (I mean of that written Word of God) the more plentiful your Preparations; but without Wisdom to understand, and apply it aright: The Devil will be more able to *wound* you, yea to wound you with your *own* Weapons, than you will be able to defend your *selves*. The Wisdom of the Lord Jesus confounded the Devil and the *Sadducees* to admiration, and discouragement from farther Attempts, by his ready and wise application of Scripture. Our own Hearts have not only a strange Perverseness against Duty, but sometimes against our due Comforts also: and I have known not only Men, but *Women* strangely witty to prevent the cure

of

of their wounded Spirits. Impertinent Applications of Scripture seldom prevail where the *Soul refuses to be comforted*, or the Arrows of Affliction and sad Apprehensions sink deep.

Thirdly, *Be careful and watchful*: Let not your Adversary take you napping, or, which is as bad, in a *senseless Indifferency*. Let not the Devil *outdo* you in these two so necessary Qualities. While Men slept, the Eenemies sowed the Tares. He watches Advantages to break; do you be as watchful to keep or or to recover your Peace.

Lastly, *Joyn Prayer to*, *and with all your Preparations.*

It is God who puts Spirit and Life into our *Spiritual* Armature, and into us too, that we may know, and be able to *use* it. He is the *God of the Spirits of all Flesh*. Your Armour, as I shewed in opening the Text, is the *Power of God*; that Power which God sends as Auxiliaries to us in our Spiritual Warfare, and that Power which God is pleased to joyn himself *unto*, and thereby renders it like himself Almighty and invincible in its *Place*, and to its *designed* Ends. Prayer takes hold on God, and adds his Influence to *your* Graces, and to *his* Word: And what cannot the Word of God, the Grace of God, and the God of *both* do, when all are united to the same end: With the Words of the Apostle to the same purpose, I therefore conclude, *Praying always with all Prayer and Supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all Perseverance.* Ep. 6. 18.

A SHORT

A SHORT TREATISE OF THE GOVERNMENT OF Our own Spirits.

Prov. 16. 32.

He that is slow to Anger, is better than the Mighty; and he that ruleth his Spirit, than he that taketh a City.

CHAP. I. SECT. I.

THese Words will not give us any *Exercise* in looking into the Context, for the better understanding their *genuine* Sense: For, according to the Nature of Proverbs, they are a short sentence, including much solid and pithy matter in a few words. We

We have in the Text a double Preference; first, of the *slow to Anger* before the *Mighty*: 2dly, of him *that ruleth his Spirit*, above him *that taketh a City*.

But the Comparison lies not in things of the same kind, and the Determination to which the *majus aut minus*, the greater or lesser degree of that ought to be given: but of things of a *divers* kind, which of them has in it the greater *Goodness*. In short, not who is the *greater*, but who of these is the *better* Man.

The particular Qualifications instanced in, are two on *each* part: and they both are expressive of Power and *Dominion*; but they greatly differ in their *Objects* and the *Orbs* wherein they act. The Mighty, the Mighty, whose Power hath for its Object things *without* himself; the Mighty to such a *Degree* that a City (wherein the Power and Policy of many single Persons are met and *united*, a City walled and *munited*, and thereby better able to resist Assaults, than a Multitude of Men in the open Field) is made a Captive by it, cannot withstand its Force: This looks great.

The Qualifications on the other part are Might and Power *too*; but as its Object is more secret and invisible, the *Spirit* of a Man, his *own* Spirit, and its Exercise principally upon the Theatre *within*, a Man's *own* Bosom; it looks not so big as the *other*, it may be is not *observed*, it may be so far as observed by the foolish *sensual* World, is not *approved*, but scorned as an abject, *pusillanimous* thing. But whatever the common Cry of brutal Men may be; the *Divine* Wisdom that judges not according to these *Appearances* that take with *Us*, but judges *righteous*

righteous Judgment: He gives the *Garland* to the latter; He is the better Man of the *two*. And this is to be understood *indifferently* of high or low, rich or poor: He that is *slow* to Anger, he that ruleth his *Spirit* is a *better* Man, than he (let him in other respects be what he will) that hath this for his *principal* Commendation, that he is a great *Conqueror*, a Mighty Man in *outward* carnal Force and Power, and that *successful* also.

I shall yet further consider the Man in his *Qualifications* that the Text gives the Preference to; that by *mistaking*, I may not set the Crown on the *wrong* Head, or leave the thing in *question* as dubious as I found it.

His first Qualification is a slowness to Anger. *He that is slow to Anger.* It is not said, He that is *never angry*, or that hath wholly *suppressed* that Passion or *Affection*: for, that were (whatever the Stoicks boast) a *maim* to *pure* Nature. We may be angry and not *sin*, or that Text, *Be angry and sin not*, is unintelligible; yea, we may sin in *not* being angry: For, so did *David* in his remission of it to his Son *Adonijah*; And good old *Eli*, for not mingling *more Fire* in his Rebukes to his *prophane* Sons, who by their Wickedness caused the Offerings of the Lord to be *abhorred*. Yea, God is said to be *angry*, and Jesus Christ was *really* so, neither of which could sin, or would lay on themselves an *Imputation* of it in a *real* and *proper* sense. Ep. 4. 26.

Again; I must consider this *slowness* to anger, as not deriving from a dull, sheepish, flegmatick, *natural* Temper, or rather *Distemper*: for, a Man *so* qualified, hath no more of Grace or Vertue in *that* regard, than may be found in some mere *Animals*:

And the Spirit of *Grace* or Human *Reaſon* hath no Concern in it at all, no more than is in the *ſtayedneſs* of a *Log*. It is not by Election, but by neceſſity of Nature or Habit. Though there may be a natural *Goodneſs* in a Sheep or Dove, we cannot allow that the *Patience* of the one, or the *Meekneſs* of the other is either a *Grace* or a *Vertue*.

The due Conſideration of the Text will ſet it beyond all Controverſy, that the *Goodneſs* of the Perſon, to whom the Preference is given, *derives* from a Rule or Government of the *Spirit*; and therefore is not a meer *Diſpoſition* how good ſoever, which we very properly have learned to call a *good Humour*. And this particular Inſtance of a *Slowneſs* to Anger doth fall under that Goodneſs of our *ruling* or governing our Spirits, for which the Commendation of the Text is *wholly* deſigned.

We muſt now conſider the later good Qualification in the Text; *And he that ruleth his Spirit*: Here is Agency and Object, that which ruleth, and that which is ruled; both included in the *ſame* Subject, the ſame *individual* Man, a certain Oeconomy, or Miniſtration of Government in the *Microcoſm* the little World of Man.

Our firſt Inquiry will be (as it ought to be) what *Part* of Man it is that carries the Title of the Perſon *He*, and bears the Regency? and what that *Spirit* is, that is, or ought to be in ſubjection to it?

Where the Mind or inward Man is diſtributed into the *ſuperior* and inferior Parts; we uſually underſtand by the *Soul* the inferior, and by the *Spirit* the ſuperiour Parts of it: But here is an Inverſion of *that* Order, or we muſt allow this Title of the *Spi-*

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rit of Man, to those Parts of the Mind or inward Man that are in the Order of Nature the *subjected* and inferior. This the holy Scripture sticks not at in more places than *one*. In the Words I am expounding, it must be understood of the *inferiour* Faculties of the Soul; and I shall give two other Scripture-Instances of the same sense, and that will be *enough*; for we are not now enquiring of the *Propriety* or Boundaries of Words and Terms, but what is the true meaning and sense of the Text: The Words are, *Do you think the Scripture saith in vain, the Spirit that dwelleth in us lusteth to Envy?* The Spirit is said here to *lust*, which must needs be an Act, Disposition, or Motion of the Will or Affections. I shall add that of our Saviour, whereby he rebuked his Disciples; *Ye know not what manner of Spirit ye are of*; *i. e.* what manner of Jealousie of, and Zeal for my Honour that is which ye pretend to; 'tis not so *pure* and *regular* as ye imagine. Jam. 4. 5. Luk. 9. 55.

This Province being thus far discharged, what remains necessary to add, is easy, and obvious; *scil.* That the superiour Faculties of the Soul are the ruling or governing Parts, the Inferiour *subjected* to them. By the *Inferiour* we understand the Affections; these ought to attend to the Dictates of the Superiour, by which is to be understood the Judgment, or Understanding, which determines of *true* or *false*, good or *evil*; and the Conscience which accordingly makes the Application to the Will and Affections, to will or *nill*, to love or *hate*, *&c.*

But here will arise another Question not inferiour in its weight to any of the former, *viz.* That seeing these superiour Faculties in Man, to which God hath given the Superintendency over the Inferiour, are so

weak, blind, wild, brib'd and biaſſed a thouſand ways, and too often proſtituted to the Service of the moſt vile Luſts and Paſſions. This Ruler ſtands in as great need of being ruled and corrected, as thoſe Faculties, the Will and Affections, which of them ſelves are perfectly *blind*: Who is the *Ruler*, and what the *Rule* of its Government, a Submiſſion and Obedience to which will juſtly reach the *Goodneſs* commended in the Text?

SECT. II.

I do not forget, nor am inſenſible of the maze of Difficulties and Contradictions, the Agitation of this Queſtion hath been *incumbred* with. I ſhall therefore content my ſelf *here* with four Propoſitions, which will go a great way toward the determining this Queſtion.

Firſt, That God himſelf as he is the Original and Author, and (by conſequence) the moſt rightful and *abſolute Owner*, ſo he is the Supreme and *Soveraign* Governour and Law-giver to all his Creatures.

Rom. 11. 36. ἐξ αὐτοῦ. This is aſſerted by the Apoſtle, and moſt apparently conſonant to the Light of *Nature*; *For of him, and through him, and to him are are all things, to whom be Glory for ever, Amen.* *All Power* (or Rom. 1. 1. Authority) *is of God*; whether *Natural*, or Political, or Eccleſiaſtical, it derives from *Him*: And whatever *other* Sanctions of Laws and Commands there may be to oblige a practical and *external* Conformity; there is no Sanction that touches the *Conſcience*, but the reſpect of their Derivation from the

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Divine Authority: Therefore the ſame Apoſtle exhorts Chriſtians to a more noble, rational and *aſſured* Obedience to their Governours, than could ariſe from meer politick or ſelfiſh regards: *For, he is the Miniſter of God to thee for good:* —— *Wherefore ye muſt needs be ſubject, not only for Wrath, but for Conſcience ſake.* Rom. 13. 4, 5.

Secondly, The Government we are now concerned to underſtand being *natural*, hath of all other the moſt immediate Derivation from God, and the *leaſt* diſputable. Parental or Paternal Government is natural, and therefore till the Sight of thoſe great Spring-heads, ſuch as Patriarchs, or more *General* Fathers was loſt by the diſtance of the *Streams*, or Confuſion of Poſterities by other accidental or violent occaſions; the Parental Government was general, moſt extenſive and indiſputable.

But of all natural Government, as that of and *within* each rational Individual is moſt *intire*, ſo it is moſt intimate and near; and of all other the *firſt* derived from God; it being *concreated* with the firſt Man, and continued diſtinct from all others in every Individual. And although the fitneſs and diſpoſedneſs of the Judgment or Underſtanding and Conſcience in each rational Creature as created, may ſufficiently determine them for that Office of *Rule* in a Mans ſelf, as deſigned and appointed thereunto by the all-wiſe Creatour; we are not left without a ſupernatural Revelation of this *Divine* Diſpoſition.

'Tis ſaid of *Saul*, that *he forced himſelf.* This is eaſily underſtood by the Context, to be meant of his violating his *own* Conſcience, ſinning againſt the light, dictates, and ſanctions of it, breaking thorow all to gratify his own impatient Paſſions. This the 1 Sam. 13. 12.

Samuel calls in the next Verſe, the not keeping *the Commandment of God*: It was a violating his Authority. The Apoſtle *Paul* reduces all Duties wherein any Man is religiouſly concerned, or with reſpect to Divine Authority to this ſecret Court of Conſcience, as to God's acceptance and his own Satisfaction: *And herein do I exerciſe my ſelf to have a* Conſcience *void of Offence towards God and towards Men.* This may ſuffice to prove that God hath placed theſe ſuperiour Faculties, not only with a diſpoſedneſs to direct the Will and rule the Affections, and all the inferiour Man, but hath inveſted them with his Authority.

Acts 24. 16.

Thirdly, The *Rule* by which the ſuperiour Faculties, the Judgment, or Underſtanding, and Conſcience are to be directed, is *Right Reaſon, and the Word of God ſupernaturally revealed.*

I ſay *Right* Reaſon: For as there is *Science falſly ſo called*, and *vain Philoſophy*, becauſe, either conſiſting of Chimerical and arbitrary Dogma's, or of no uſe to the benefit or *bettering* of Mankind; ſo many things paſs for *Reaſon*, and obtain that Reputation both in private and publick, that are meer Fallacies.

1 Tim. 6. 20.

And indeed if we conſider the *Shipwrack* of Reaſon, or of the Light of *pure* Nature, that is the doleful and apparent Conſequence of the *Fall*: we ought to be concerned to examine every thing with the greater Diligence, that impoſes it ſelf under the pretence of that *venerable* Authority: Leſt we receive baſe Mettal to our loſs, under the *counterfeit* Stamp and Image of *Ceſar*.

It hath been the wiſe and gracious Work of God in favour of Mankind, ſo maim'd and impotent in this

this *Guide* of his Life, to superinduce a *new* Edition of Light and Truth for our direction in *Morals*, derived immediately from the *Divine* Will and Understanding, and contained in his *written* Word. To this it becomes us to take heed, as to a Light that shineth in a dark place, and to *revere* it to that degree, as readily and thankfully to receive it to conduct, and correct our Understandings and Consciences, and over-rule their Dictates, wherein they *dissent* from it.

But that Part of the *written* Word which is properly *Evangelical*, and which the Light of Nature (how pure and clear soever) could have no prospect of, without the Assistance of *supernatural Divine* Revelation, hath, or ought to have, so absolute and independent Dominion over our Understandings and Consciences, that all the Exercise of our Reason *thereabout* is only to take in the due sense and meaning of those Expressions, by which the *Divine* Understanding and Will is *communicated* to us.

In short, our Understandings, as they (according to the Light of Nature) apprehend, and we accordingly acknowledge the Divine Understanding to be *infallible*, and the Divine Will *inculpable*; that which derives most purely from God (which generally is his written Word, or the Sense contained therein) is to be so far the Light and Rule of our Understanding, that nothing is to be admitted as true, or good in Contradiction to what it affirms or denies to be such.

Fourthly, That he who with an upright honest Mind, applies himself effectually to, the Conduct and Government of his Affections by his Understanding and Conscience; guided by this right Reason,

assisted by the Light of God's Word: He I say is the Man that so rules his Spirit, as (according to my Text) he *is a better Man than he that taketh a City.*

I am not ignorant, that an honest *well-meaning* Person, who proposes to himself a *Government* of his Spirit by these Rules and Helps, may in *many* things miscarry and tread awry. Mis-understandings of the *Rule*, Mis-applications of it arising from the Ignorance of our *selves*, and sometimes in the best of Men, the Violence and *Unrulinesse* of some Passions or Affections, *abetted* by various occasions, will render our Conformity to the Rule, many Degrees below *Perfection*: yet a Mind applying it self to *practical* Understanding, will not only be *positively* good, but compared with that which is *disbanded*, and let loose to blind and impetuous Passions, will be eximiously and *excellingly* good. It will ordinarily keep within some *Compass* that hath a Decorum and *Beauty* in it. *If thine Eye be single, thy whole Body shall be full of Light.* Honesty and Simplicity in the *Aim* will scatter many of those Clouds, and much of that *benighting* Darkness, which corrupt and base Ends *embroil* the Understanding withal. And indeed, though natural and acquired Parts in Conjunction with an *upright* Heart, will *ordinarily* much outdo *Honesty*, not so attended: yet, with the Helps afforded by Divine Favour, to those who live in our Age and Place, that Scripture will be *experimentally* confirmed; *And an High-way shall be there, and a Way, and it shall be called the Way of Holiness: The unclean shall not pass over it, but it shall be for those: The way-faring Men (though Fools) shall not err therein*

Mat. 6. 22.

Isa. 35. 8.

in. Therein is a *Supplement* not of the Text. The Senſe in ſhort is, that thoſe under the Light of the Goſpel, whoſe *Buſineſs* it is to be holy and happy ſhall not miſs the *main Scope*, though they are not ſo *ſharp-ſighted* as many others.

CHAP. II. SECT. I.

FROM the Words explained as before, I ſhall lay down this Propoſition.

That he who governs his own Spirit, is a better Man than he that makes a Conqueſt of a multitude of other Mens Bodies and external Poſſeſſions. Or,

That it is Man's Excellency to govern his own Spirit.

This is that wherein he excels the Brutes, who are carried by a mere *Impetus* of Inclination or Averſation. It is that wherein he excels the far greater Number of Men, who ſo far *unman* themſelves, as to be hurried blind-fold by their Paſſions, knowing no other Law or Intereſt but their Appetites, no other Happineſs or Satisfaction, but making *Proviſion for the Fleſh to fulfil the Luſts thereof.*

This brutal feral Power ſubſervient to Ends more vile than it ſelf, may render Men greater, but 'tis the Government of a Man's own Spirit that renders him *better* than others: That by its appearances may carry the Opinion of *Fools*, this as real and ſubſtantial, obtains the Preference with God and all *wiſe* Men.

It is this Government of the *Spirit* wherein *the Righteous is more excellent than his Neighbour.* The holy

holy Scriptures give us no Encomiums, no Elogies of Praise in the Memorials of great Conquerors, for that *mere* Consideration, but often the contrary: But the Volume of that sacred Testimony is every where furnished with the Commendations of those Men, who were so much Men and *Saints*, as by the Grace of God, governed their own Spirits, crucified the old Man with its Affections and Lusts, lived by Rule, ordered their Conversations aright.

Levit. 10. 3. 'Tis said of *Aaron* that he *held his Peace*, *i. e.* he held so straight a Rein upon his *Passions*, that (his Sons *Nadab* and *Abihu* being devoured by strange Fire *from* the Lord, for offering strange Fire to the Lord in contempt of his Command) he sanctified the *Severity* of God, acknowledging by his Silence, that the Breach made on his Family by so stupendious a Judgment was *just*; so just and *necessary* as it became him to *revere* it; and he well content that God should vindicate his own Honour, though so much to *his* Cost. And probably it was for *this* that he obtained the Honour, which no Man ever obtained but he, scil. to be recorded in Scripture under that *high* Character, *Aaron the Saint of the Lord.*

Psal. 106. 16.

Job had the greatest Tryals that ever Man had, enough to have routed the Patience, and broken the Consistency of the greatest Composure and Fortitude; but he held the Helm in his Hand, he kept himself steady, while the Storm of unparallel'd Providences made a wrack of all but a perverse Wife. *In all this* (saith the Text) *Job sinned not with his Lips, nor charged God foolishly.* Ye have heard of the Patience of *Job*. The Devil designed to prove *Job* an Hypocrite in his *Appearances* of Piety, and

Job 2. 10. Jam. 5. 11.

God

God a Liar in saying *Job* was such an *upright Man*: but by *Job*'s *ruling his Spirit*, the Devil was *confounded*, God and his Servant *Job* justified, and the Words of the Text are the matter of God's Triumph and Glorying in *Job* thus ruling and over-ruling his own Spirit.

In order to this Excellency the Apostle *Paul* wisely prepared himself against the Tyranny of Custom or Superstition in indifferent things. *All things are lawful, but I will not be brought under the Power of any*; *i. e.* neither my Passions, nor those of others shall *usurp* Authority over my Understanding or my Liberty to act accordingly. 1 Cor. 6. 12.

Above all other Examples to this End, those of our blessed Redeemer excelled in the *steady* Government of his own Spirit; he was in all things *purely natural* of the same Make with the rest of Mankind; he had the same *Affections*, was equally exposed to Hunger, Thirst, Pain, Weariness; his Temptations exceeded those of any other: Yet under all he so governed his Spirit, that nothing of *Disorder* was to be found in it. His Affections moved not, but at the Command of a sanctified Will, guided by a clear and *pure* Understanding: He had nothing of that Corruption within *him*, that in us ecchoes to the Call of Temptations from *without*; *when he was reviled, he reviled not again*: The Agitations of his Soul was like that of the most pure Water, retaining its *Clearness*, (though shaken) and nothing sullied with those Dregs which lodg in us, and are so easily stirred and mix themselves with our best Motions. Heb. 4. 15.

The highest Instance of the Rule of his Spirit appeared in that Scene which some of his Detracters have

have dared to charge with the *manifeſt* Tokens of Weakneſs and Puſillanimity. *My Soul* (ſaith he) *is exceeding ſorrowful even unto Death.*——*O my Father, if it be poſſible, let this Cup paſs from me; nevertheleſs, not as I will, but as thou wilt.*

Mark 14. 34.

Our Saviour in theſe Paſſages moſt abundantly expreſſes the juſt and *due* Meaſures by which his Paſſions moved. He permitted thoſe *deep* Impreſſions of that Proſpect he had of his dying Sufferings, as they were Penal, (not for his *own* Faults, for he was moſt perfectly *innocent*, but) as in them he bare the Puniſhment of *our* Sins in his own Body and Soul. In all of this Nature he was *voluntarily* complying therein with his *Love* to faln Man, and that Obedience and Duty wherein he was by his own Conſent obliged to his Father. And though his Fortitude was *infinitely* beyond any Man's, by which he could have faced the ſevereſt and moſt *terrifying* Objects, without the leaſt change of Countenance or depreſſion of his Spirits: yet he did not ſo, becauſe he *ought* not; his Duty as Mediator (and being under that peculiar Law) was to ſuffer, and to *chuſe* Suffering. He was ſent and came into the World to that very End, which never was the caſe of any Man but of *him*.

And whereas his *ardent* Prayer, that if *poſſible* that Cup might paſs from him, hath been by ſome Adverſaries of Chriſtianity reflected on as a kind of *Repentence* of his great Undertaking; There is nothing in it but what anſwered the Conduct of the moſt *deep* Wiſdom, and the anſwer of the moſt *ſtayed* and well-govern'd Affections.

The Spirit and Grace of God which dwelt in our Lord Jeſus without *meaſure*, did not deſtroy or *abate* in

in him any thing of that which was *purely* natural. Death, as a diſſolution of thoſe Bands of Union between the Soul and the Body, was a proper and *ſinleſs* object of Fear: But as his Death was accompanied with Pain and Sufferings to ſuch a degree, as anſwered to what was *due* to them whom he *redeemed*, it was to be feared to a degree *proportionable*.

And as this Fear was a part of his Suffering (which was ſo neceſſary to his Body and Soul, being made a Sacrifice and Offering for Sin,) ſo it was but the Motion of pure Nature, of pure natural Affection; which to be *without* is reckoned by the Spirit of *God*, to be not only a Sin in it *ſelf*, but alſo a cauſe of thoſe that ſhould render the laſt Days ſo *perilous*. 2 Tim. 2. 3.

But herein ſhined eſpecially the Government our bleſſed Redeemer had of his own Spirit, that he could give to *pure* natural Fear *ſuch* a Scope as became him; and yet make ſo *full* and perfect a ſtop, when its farther Advance would have uſurped on the Soveraignty of the Divine Law; of that Divine Law which obliges by both the Light of Nature, and that of Evangelical Grace, to ſacrifice ſome *natural* Rights to his Glory and the Good of our Brethren; truſting to the Divine Benignity to make a full Compenſation ſome *other* way.

And by ſo much the more, as his pure *natural* Fear, Averſation and Abhorrence of ſo great a Miſery was riſen in his Soul; ſo much the more noble and *conſpicuous* was the *Government* of his Paſſions, in their not ſo much as *reluctting* againſt the Divine Will, abſtracting perfectly from ſuch an Evil; yea from the Conſideration of the Divine Will, that ſo he muſt ſuffer; they, even thoſe Affections aſſiſt in forwarding his Sufferings; and a greater Zeal appears

pears for ſuffering than ever was of a Fear and Abhorrence of it. The Roman Heroes did not with ſo great a Reſolution caſt themſelves into the gaping Chaſm, as he into this manifold Hell of Miſery. He ſeemed *afraid* leſt his Adverſaries ſhould by miſtake *miſs* their Prey, or his Friends ſhould feel one Spark of that Fire, which he was deſigned to embrace and quench in his *own* Boſom.

Whom ſeek ye? (ſays he to theſe who ſought his Blood) *I am he. Let theſe go their way.* And elſewhere; *I have a Baptiſm to be baptiſed with, and O how I am ſtraitned till it be accompliſhed!* This Croſs of our Lord Jeſus was the greateſt *Tryal*, and the greateſt *Proof* of the Government and Rule of his Spirit, that in ſo great a *Difference* and *ſeeming* Contrariety of Duties, he could anſwer all with that *Exactneſs*, as if he had been a mere Intelligence, and had nothing of humane Paſſions or Affections moving in him. This was a moſt perfect Proof and *Exemplar* of the Excellency of governing our Spirits.

John 18. 7, 8.

Luke 12. 50.

SECT. II.

The Goodneſs of governing our own Spirits, above that of Power over the Perſons and Concerns of other Men.

Firſt, *The governing a Man's own Spirit hath in it much more of Generoſity and true Greatneſs.*

What Greatneſs of Spirit is in thoſe Men, who are ſo feeble as to be hurried on by vicious Paſſions; obſtinately bent to have their Wills how blind and unreaſonable ſoever in *themſelves*, and miſchievous and deſtructive to others? What mighty Vertue or worthy

worthy of Praiſe, to thirſt after the Applauſe of Greatneſs, and a remembrance to Poſterity as an Heroe, by a mad *hair-braind* World, who have generally had ſo poor a Spirit as to flatter *Greatneſs* for fear its Weight ſhould otherwiſe cruſh them. Certainly *mere* Power ſubduing others, without any Conſideration of Right, Juſtice, or any Vertue (for 'tis ſuch a Power and Domination we ſpeak of) is the moſt feeble and ſlaviſh in it ſelf, and the moſt pernicious to Mankind.

I can hardly believe that any Man who has a ſenſe of that great after-reckoning, which all Men muſt make with the moſt high and holy God; would not rather chooſe in that dreadful Day to ſtand before God an humble, meek, ſelf-denying mortified Believer (tho the moſt obſcure Perſon in the World) who hath endeavoured to live according to a divinely inlightned and ſanctified Reaſon, than an *Alexander* or a *Julius Cæſar*, a *Dyoniſius*, or any that have been the very Image of the great *Abaddon*.

But he that governs his own Spirit is truly great and *generous*: His Conflicts are the moſt *juſt* and alſo the moſt *difficult*. It is no great matter for a Man to ride over *other* Mens Bellies whom he *hates*, as croſs to his Ambition and *Self-will*: but to turn our Weapons into our *own* Boſoms, and ſtab thoſe Luſts that have been dearer to us than our very *Souls*; thoſe Luſts that were bred and born in us, from the Service of which we have drawn all our ſenſual Delights, and thoſe ſweet Dreams of Felicity wherein we have bleſſed our ſelves, and have had our *grateful* Sentiments, accompanied with the Conſent and Applauſes of the *Generality* of Mankind; and thoſe in vogue for wiſe ſagacious Perſons: This is great indeed;

indeed; especially considering that the Struggles of
Mat. 18. 8, 9. these inordinate Affections are so strong, continuate, and near to us, that every blow we reach them, we feel the Smart of, at least so long as their Interest is great in us, as if it were a wounding our selves, and a Dagger piercing our own Bowels. I will add, what renders it most *generous*, *viz.* that this bridling our Affections, and mortifying their corrupt and extravagant Motions, is to reduce our selves to a right and sanctified Reason to serve the Will and Interests of God and his Glory, which is the most becoming an intelligent Being that is *his* Creature, as 'tis the only *genuine* Gratitude to, and Acknowledgment of his Creator, and the only *wise* Method for obtaining Holiness and Happiness which are inseparable.

A governing and bridling a Man's *own* Spirit, from far *less generous* Principles, was deemed by the better sort of Heathens more *great* and glorious
Quin. Curt. in Vitâ. than their *other* Victories. *Alexander* the Great gloried more in his abstinence from *beholding* the temptatious Beauties of the Captive Persian Women, than in subduing to his *Will* the Persons and Possessions of their Princes. *Agesilaus* a King of *Sparta*, refusing the Kisses of a beautiful Boy, and being by
Plut. in Vitâ. some Lookers-on wondred at, and in some kind *reproved* as too morose, replied, that he would give away one half of his Kingdom to be able to resist such another Temptation.

This *self*-Government is that Greatness and Generosity that renders a Man so free, as 'tis not in the Power of bad Men, nor the evil Angels neither to *enslave* him. This Notion was the *Philosopher's* Glory; but the Christian's is so much *more* glorious, that the Glory of mere *Philosophers* is no Glory by reason

reaſon of that Chriſtian Glory which ſo far *excelleth* it. A ſingular Inſtance of this Chriſtian Greatneſs we have in the Apoſtle *Paul: None of theſe things move me*: I ſtand as a Rock againſt all their Billows: The ſtrong Winds and Storms that beat on my *outward* Concerns, do not ſo reach my *inward* Man as to make any Commotion *there*, much leſs ſo as to remove me through a baſe Fear of ſuffering from my Duty. Acts 24. 20.

Another Expreſſion of the ſame Goſpel Hero is, *God forbid that I ſhould glory ſave in the Croſs of our Lord Jeſus, by whom the World is crucified unto me, and I unto the World.* He accounted nothing more great and generous, than to be as much above, or out of the reach of the World's Temptations, as a dead Man: Nor any thing conducing to this Greatneſs *ſo much* as the Croſs of Chriſt, *i. e.* the practical Knowledg of a crucified Redeemer. So that in fine, this Government of our own Spirits is not only *better* than that *other* Might and Dominion to which it is oppoſed; but, 'tis alſo more *mighty*, overcomes *greater* Difficulties, and its very Power as *Moral*, much more as *Chriſtian*, has a Goodneſs in it equal to its Power; yea the very Power is Goodneſs in the *Principle*, and its Exercite is Goodneſs in the Practice. Gal. 6. 14.

Secondly, *The ruling of our own Spirits is our Duty, and a Compliance with that which is the true and only Meaſure of Goodneſs.*

A Man *beſide* his Duty, is ſo far vain and waſte; a Man *oppoſite* to his Duty, is ſo far vile, polluted a Sinner, a crooked deformed thing. *This only have I found, that God made Man upright, but they have ſought out many Inventions.* God made Man *ſtreight* Eccl. 7. 29. ישר

or as the Hebrew, moſt ſignificantly [*right*]. He made him *right* what he ought to be, every way adapted and diſpoſed to his Duty, and the holy Ends of his Being. And this was that Goodneſs which God ſaw in him, which he calls *very good*: Yea, for the ſake of this his perfect diſpoſedneſs to Goodneſs, which was not then *crook'd* by any perverſe ungoverned Paſſion; all the reſt of the Creation with him was ſaid to be *very good*, being capable by Man to reach their final End, the glorifying their Creator.

Power and Dominion by Conqueſt or Force over others *may* be our Sin. And though the Violence of Arms is in ſome caſes not only lawful, but a *neceſſary Duty*; yet 'tis *rare* that either that, or its *End*, or both, be not as ſinful againſt God, as miſerable to Men. And 'tis one part of the Goodneſs of the Government of our *own* Spirits, that it can ſpare thoſe Powers in their *beſt* Exercise; for did every one govern his own Spirit, the Sword of Juſtice would ruſt in its Sheath. *The Law is not made for a righteous Man, but for the lawleſs and diſobedient,* 1 Tim. 1. 9. ἀνόμοις. *for the Ungodly and Sinners, for Unholy and Profane*, &c. It is made for, and to be executed upon the *lawleſs*, and them only: upon them who are not a Law to themſelves, who do not, by the Law embraced and written in the Heart, govern their own Spirits.

Thirdly, *To rule our own Spirits, is (beyond all diſpute) every Man's own Buſineſs and Concern.*

He that rules his own Spirit, diſcharges his own Province. He is not a Buſie-body in other Mens matters in ſo doing. Who was ever charged as an Evil-doer, an Oppreſſor, a Breaker of the Peace, an Uſur-

Uſurper of the Rights of another, for ranſacking his own Heart and Ways to the bottom; for exerciſing a Dominion over himſelf; directing to that which is right to God, to Men, to himſelf; correcting what is amiſs, and reſtraining his own Spirit as with a Bridle, that it may not paſs its due Bounds, in thought, word or deed?

Keep thy Heart with all Diligence: for out of it are the Iſſues of Life. This is a Province, the diſcharge of which is committed to every Man by the Supream Authority of God himſelf. It may be a pertinent Queſtion, and a juſt Rebuke to ſome in ſome caſes, Who made thee thy Brother's Keeper? Who made thee a Lord or a Ruler over *Us?* But a Man's ruling himſelf, correcting his own Diſorders, was never imputed as a Crime by God or Man. Prov. 4. 23

But *Might*, and the forcing others by its Violence, though ſo neceſſary that there were no living *without* it in ſo licentious a World, yet how ordinarily doth it break over its proper Channel, and prove Ruinous by its Exceſs? How much more often is it taken into, and abuſed by thoſe Hands that have nothing to do with it? There is a double Fault, where Wrong is done by him who hath no Authority to do *Right*.

It is too natural to every Man to be deſirous that all Men ſhould be under the check of Government and Correction but himſelf: Therefore Might or Power is fearful to its Neighbour. He that has it, can rarely keep it quiet, that like Fire it take not hold of his Neighbour's Houſe. *Be not afraid* (ſaith the Text) *when one is made rich.* Pſal. 49. 16.

What need this Caution, this Inhibition? Riches are a Man's Happineſs: He that attains them, is eſteemed

med a blessed Man, all Men commend and honour him; *Whiles he lived, he blessed himself: and Men will praise thee when thou doest well to thy self.* This Estate seems rather to move Envy than *Fear*. But there is somewhat certainly in Riches, of which the wise Men saith it *answereth all things*, that tempts Men to fear also. In short, a Man that hath them, hath the means in a great degree to do Good, there is no fear of that indeed: But also to do *Evil*, there's the Fear. Mens Hearts are generally so bad, that they will do Evil, if for no other cause but this, that *it is in the Power of their Hand.* Riches and Power are *mostly*; as much Provender, little Work, and no Bridle to a mettl'd Horse, that kicks and flings at all near him, 'tis *Provision for the Flesh to fulfil the Lusts thereof.*

V. 18.

Mic. 2. 1.

Rom. 13. 14.

Might and Power knows no Bounds, but what it cannot break over: It doth not intermeddle with all Wisdom, but it will intermeddle with all Mens doings and interests; to subdue them to be his own, or at his own dispose; 'tis a great Ingrosser and Usurper, where self-Government doth not bank and bound it to the Channel and Service of Vertue. *Wo to them that devise Iniquity, and work Evil upon their Beds; when the Morning is light, they practise it; because it is in the Power of their Hand. And they covet Fields, and take them by Violence, and Houses, and take them away; so they oppress a Man and his House, even a Man and his Heritage.*

Fourthly, *Ruling our own Spirits by Christ's Rule, hath the most excellent Principles, and the highest Ends.*

There may be a ruling our Spirits, which is but a *Mis-rule*, bending them from one Crookedness

to

to another: But where the Rule of Christ is the Rule by, and *to* which we endeavour to manage our Spirits: This governing hath Principles and Ends that have no Parallel for Goodness and *true* Greatness.

For its Principles, shall I give you that *first* which *is* first (in order of being) of all Christian Vertues or Graces, *Evangelical sanctifying Faith.*

That Faith, by which we have a Prospect of *those* Motives, that are of greater weight in the Ballance, than the All of this lower World. That Faith by which we adhere to God's Will, trusting on God's *Word*; who can as soon die as lie, cease to be God as cease to be *true*, and can as easily perform his Promises as speak them: That Faith by which we enter into the Covenant of Grace, and become (I dare not say Confederates with God, but) *Fœderati*, or Parties to that Covenant, wherein God hath *graciously* become bounden to us. That Faith by which we become *so united* to Christ, as to be his *Members*; Members of a Divine *Head*, and Head of *Influence*, from whom Faith derives a Power, greater and better than ever subsisted in any mere Man without it. I will only add one Quality more of this Principle; *viz.* that it sanctifies the Heart; which is to say, it *purifies* our Affections, as well as impowers us in the pursuing their Objects.

Gal. 2. 20.

Ep. 2. 12.

Col. 2. 19.

A second Principle is *Love*, a holy, a Divine Love; a Divine Love, as it hath principally a Divine *Object*, and a Divine Original and *Author*, and in a way supernatural derived to us. 'Tis the Love that is the Chariot of the Government of a Christian's Spirit; the *Vehicle* of its Motions. *A Chariot the midst thereof being paved with Love.* What more pow-

Can. 3. 10.

erful than Love? What more ſweetning to doing or ſuffering? What more regular in its deſigns and Tendencies than a *holy* Love?

A third Principle (which is not the meaneſt) is a Principle of *Righteouſneſs*, an inherent prevailing Diſpoſition to give to every one their due, and to God in the firſt place. This Principle is that which we commonly call *Honeſty*. And indeed that Rule that is *governing*, that is on the bottom of pure impartial Honeſty, muſt needs *excel*. The Apoſtle
Phil. 3. 8. gives us three Qualifications of what he commends to us; *True*, *honeſt*, *juſt*; And they ſeem all to intend much the ſame thing. When once a Man comes to this Point, that he will not, he dares not do or be otherwiſe than becomes him, than is his Duty;
Pſal. 45. 7. *He loves Righteouſneſs, and hates Iniquity*: That Man's ordering and managing his Spirit muſt be lovely, truly comely and excellent. I might add the Principle of *Gratitude*, the moſt generous of all, and moſt abounding in a real Chriſtian, who, in all his ways is deſigned to acknowledg God; ſuch a due Object of higheſt Gratitude from all Men, that he that lives in the Neglect of it, is an ungrateful Wretch; let him complement his Fellow-ſinners at what rate he will.

The Ends of governing our Spirits according to Chriſtian Principles are more excellent, being eſpecially five, which I ſhall but name.

1. To reduce it to, and maintain it in its Rectitude.

2. To live more happily: This Rectitude being as conducible to it, as Health is to bodily Happineſs. To ſerve our Generation, which is next to be preferred after our ſelves, and ſometimes before our ſelves.

3. *It*

3. *It hath for its End a preparedneſs for Heaven.* The Grace of God in us, though it be nothing meritorious of the State of the Bleſſed; yet it is that which renders us *meet to be Partakers of the Inheritance of the Saints in Light.* It is *Gratia diſponens*, that which fits us for Heaven. An unmortified Spirit, wherein the Luſts and Paſſions of Men are *unbridled*, and take their Swing, and are not ſubdued ſo far as a ſincere *Diſpoſition* to Holineſs and Purſuit of it, is no way capable of this Bleſſedneſs. The Veſſels deſigned for Glory, muſt be *before prepared unto Glory*, *wrought for the ſelf-ſame thing*. *Every Imagination and high Thought muſt* (in ſincere deſignation) *be brought under the Obedience of Chriſt.* Col. 1. 12. Rom. 9. 23. 2 Cor. 5. 5.

I know not how Men of any *Diſcretion* and *impartial* Inquiry into their own Hearts, can ſatisfy themſelves of the Sincerity of their Diſpoſition to this Obedience, who do not watch, and pray, and work to ſome degree of *Induſtry* for the obtaining of it; And, as the Apoſtle ſpeaks, *keep under their Bodies*, i. e. uſe all means to bring their Affections into order; leſt after all their preſumptions of their Security for another World, they ſhould prove *Caſt-aways.*

4. *They rule their Spirits, that they may in this World be to the Honour and Glory of God and the Redeemer.*

Theſe are none of the Principles from which, nor Ends *for* which Men ordinarily greaten and lift up themſelves in the World by Force and Might: They are commonly Principles and Ends of quite another Nature, have nothing to do with things of ſo worthy a Character; ſelf, corrupted

rupted ſelf, is their Spring, and their Aims riſe no higher.

5. The Advantage of governing our own Spirits above Power to ſubdue others, is, That *to the overcoming and ſubduing others, many Hands are neceſſary beſide our own, and thereby the Action and its Succeſs is common to many: Whereas the Government of our own Spirits is our own peculiar Act.* And although the Honour of every *good* Act eſpecially is to God, as performed by his Grace; yet an Act which is peculiarly ours (which a Conqueſt over our ſelves is) doth give us a much greater ſhare of the Character of Goodneſs, than what is dependent on thouſands for the help of Heads, Hearts and Hands.

6. The Capacity of governing our own Spirits renders us capable of a Law, and the Ends of it, which is obtained by governing our Spirits.

Whether we conſider a Law as the Law of God or *Man* (if a Law indeed) we are obliged to render Obedience to it. All Laws are ſuppoſed to have to do with *rational* Creatures, and the Scripture ſuppoſes, and affirms alſo, ſhould be obeyed for *Conſcience* ſake; that is, not only an external *politick* Obedience is to be given them, but an internal and conſcientious Obedience.

Divines and Philoſophers agree, that *mere Animals*, on the conſideration of their being without *Reaſon*, cannot be guilty of Sin or moral Polution, becauſe they are not capable of a Law: Certainly this places them at a great diſtance below *rational* Creatures. To bring this home to our purpoſe; Doth not that highly contribute to our Goodneſs, that ſo far ranks us above Beaſts? And indeed though a Man be a

Man

Man as to his *essential* Considerations, who is a Law-breaker, a lawless Person, with whom a Law has no regard, and, *as such*, no effect; yet as being a Man, and yet so bad a Man, he becomes more vile than a Beast; as he that neglects and destroys the Ends of Reason, which is so great an Excellency, is more vile than that which never had such a trust, but acts suitably to its natural Principles tho of a lower kind.

7. *We are able to resist Temptation, no farther than we have the Government of our own Spirits.*

Temptation, whether from Men, or from the wicked one, is no Temptation to *us*, any farther than it finds or begets an Inclination to *compliance* with it. 'Tis this Inclination therefore that is to be disposed and ordered according to *Duty*: But he that doth not govern and rule his Affections, is like the Chaff driven to and fro with the Wind. Tinder or *Gun-powder* does not sooner take the *Spark* fain into it, nor is more *violently* affected by it, than an ungoverned Spirit by Temptations. *The Prince of this World cometh* (saith our Saviour, that great Commander of his own Spirit) *and hath nothing in me*, i. e. no inordinate Affection, no sinful Passion or Inclination for his Temptation to work upon, or that is of his Party. But was this a sufficient Security from the *Prevalence* of Temptation? No such matter; it was the compleat Government of his own Spirit, not only in the Habit and Power, but in the Act and Exercise also that was his Security. Tho some add the Impossibility of his *Defection*, because of the Hypostatical Union. John 14. 30.

Adam in his Integrity, and the glorious Angels had nothing *in them* that inclined them to Sin.

As

As they came out of *God's* Hand, there was a pure and entire Goodneſs in them; only they were in a *Poſſibility* of *Defection*: Their *actual Defection*, in the firſt *Diſpoſition* to Sin, aroſe from their letting looſe the Reins of the Government of their *own Spirits*, which they ought to have preſerved untainted, and had *Power* to do ſo.

But how much more have we need to put the Bridle on *our Spirits*, that are already ſo full of *Diſorder*, and wholly ingaged under the Power of Corruption to an Indiſpoſition and averſion to Good, and a violent *Diſpoſition* to Evil till ſanctified? *And God ſaw that the Wickedneſs of Man was great upon the Earth, and that every Imagination of the Thought of his Heart was only evil continually.* Gen. 6. 5. *Vain Man would be wiſe, though he be born as a wild Aſſes Colt.* Job 14. And for thoſe who have the new Creature born from Heaven in them; thoſe *holy Principles* that diſpoſe them to all Righteouſneſs; they know, and *Experience* tells us, how great a Power of corrupt Affections and Luſts abide within them, inſomuch that that Saint and Apoſtle, *Paul*, groans out this Complaint; *O wretched Man that I am, who ſhall deliver me from the Body of this Death?* Rom. 7. 24.

8. *That Man who can rule his own Spirit, is the moſt fit to rule other Men.* This will hold true from the *ſmalleſt* Family to the greateſt *Monarchy*. No Man ſo fit to govern others as he that hath firſt attained to the Government of himſelf. Magiſtracy is God's Ordinance, and Magiſtrates are in God's ſtead, and bear his Name: But that which carries the exacteſt Image of God in it that they are capable of, is their *extenſive* Knowledg, and being free from the *Tyranny* of any Paſſion. *Solomon's* large Heart

Heart ſo capacious of Knowledg, and of ſo generous a Greatneſs, did undoubtedly much adorn the Beginning of his Reign; but his Wiſdom which preſerved his Spirit in ſo great a Calm and Serenity, adorned it much more: It was this Government of his own Spirit that added to his reaching Head an underſtanding Heart: The exact Anſwer to that Prayer of his, inſpired by the *Divine* Spirit; *Give therefore thy Servant an underſtanding* Heart, *to judg thy People, and to diſcern between good and bad*: His Father *David* was a Man cut out for Government, as he was Maſter of his own Paſſions: *The Lord hath ſought him a Man after his own Heart*; a Man whoſe Will followed God's Will, not his *own* corrupt Inclinations. The greateſt Inſtances of this was in his correcting thoſe violent Paſſions of Revenge and Ambition, from ſo noble Principles as Duty and Loyalty, when the Life of *Saul* his implacable Enemy and unreaſonable *Injurer*, was by ſo *ſignal a Providence* brought within his Power: He did not here, as ſome have done, plead *Providence* to juſtify the Breach of a *Precept* and his Duty, and make God himſelf ſerve with his Sins.

1 Kings 3. 9.

1 Kings 3. 9.

A Spirit of *Power* derived from the Spirit that is almighty ſanctifies all our Powers, and renders the Political Powers, which are *of* God, to be *for* God; and that cannot be for the hurt, at leaſt for the Injury of any. Happy thoſe Kingdoms, thoſe Countries, Cities, Families, whoſe Governours act their Parts without perverſe unbridled Paſſions, moving in ſo exact and regular an Order, as not to be tempted out of it by any Man, no nor by themſelves. This is an Excellency beyond compare, to be fit to be a God by reſemblance among Men.

9. *He*

9. *He that governs his own Spirit, is good in all his Relations; which no other can be.*

This makes a Husband without Bitterneſs, and that dwells with his Wife, and uſes his Superiority as a Man of Knowledg: This diſpoſes a Wife to that Faithfulneſs and Reſpect as becomes her Place. Parents to rule Children ſo, as not to provoke them to Wrath, by correcting for their Pleaſure, rather than the Childrens Profit: A Child to filial Reſpect and Obedience. A Maſter not to be froward, ſurly, threatning, but to give to his Servant that which is meet, and not to deſpiſe his Cauſe, when for his Right he meekly contends with him: A Servant to be faithful, diligent, obedient, and to bear Rebukes, and ſometimes Corrections, not only for *Evil*, but alſo for *well*-doing; to carry it well, not only to the kind and gentle, but alſo to the froward. A Subject to honour, obey, and ſerve his Prince; not to expoſe the Infirmities of a Political Father through Levity or Malignity; much leſs to ſlander him, not to be unruly, troubleſom, if their own Partialities are not countenanced; and to intermeddle with things belong not to him, but are above his Sphere; yea it will render a Prince to be indeed *Pater Patriæ*, who will be well pleaſed that *Salus Populi* ſhould be his *Suprema Lex*.

10. *He who in good earneſt deſigns and endeavours to rule his Spirit, cannot be a bad Man.*

Though he may have Infirmities, he cannot be wicked; though he come not up to legal Perfection, he will not come ſhort of Evangelical Sincerity; (ſuppoſing him acquainted with the Scriptures) he can neither be an Enemy to God in his Mind, nor an Heretick in his Opinion: *Errare poſſum Hæreticus*

cus esse nolo, is St. *Austin*'s well known Saying. That of the Apostle is certainly the Character of a good Christian, who I think cannot be a bad Man; *Herein* (i. e. the Christian Principles) *do I exercise my self, to have a Conscience void of Offence towards God, and towards Men.* Acts 24. 16.

The Doctrine which asserts the Excellency of ruling our *own* Spirits, and the *Goodness* of those who bare this Rule, above all those that have natural Force, by which a Man prevails against others being thus far proved: I shall next consider what Improvement may be made of this *important* Truth.

CHAP. III.

THE Improvement of the Doctrine.

I shall improve this Doctrine for the Reproof of five sorts of Men.

And First, *of those who ambitiously reach at that Greatness above others, which God hath made none of their Duty, and hath set out of their Reach; and in the mean time are wholly unconcerned for this far greater Excellency that God hath made their Duty, and put within their Power by Divine promised Assistance*, scil. *the Rule of their own Spirits.*

What projecting, intrigueing, troubling the World and themselves, does the whole Life, and all its powers of many Men resolve themselves into, for no other end but to top others in the *Shadows* of Greatness; but to govern *themselves*, which is both true Greatness and *Goodness*, are the serious Thoughts

Thoughts and induſtry but of a very few. God, who is the moſt perfect Underſtanding and Truth, hath told us wherein Goodneſs and real Tranquillity conſiſts; who are the beſt of Men, and the moſt happy; that how low ſoever our Station is in the World, we are capable of this Felicity, that 'tis to be attained with much greater Certainty, and upon far better Terms: But we will have none of this; but that which of it ſelf is of as ſmall a value as vexatious Vanity, and to moſt, both unlawful and impoſſible.

Pſal. 4. 2. *O ye Sons of Men! How long will ye turn my Glory into Shame? How long will you love Vanity and ſeek after leaſing? Selah. But know that the Lord hath ſet apart him that is godly for himſelf.* And who is this godly Man, but he that ſincerely endeavours to rule his Affections, and conſequently his Life to a Conformity to God's Law? This is the Man that he has marked out for the *wiſe and good* Man, meet for his Favour, his Service, his Approbation, and his Portion among Men. And what and *whoſe* Portion they muſt be that are rejected of God, I will leave to you to determine, when your Thoughts are ſerious.

Secondly, *It reproves thoſe who value themſelves by their having other Men under their Feet.* This may ſignify their Might, but not their Goodneſs at all. But I pray what value is to be put upon *mere* Might and Power? Poyſons we ſay have a great vertue, *i. e. Force*, but 'tis a miſchievous one. The faln Angels are mighty in ſtrength, but what value is to be put on them? Believe it, they that are under *Foot* may be better Men than thoſe who tread upon their *Heads*. We read of the wiſeſt among Phi-

Philoſophers, that they have been ſold for *Slaves*; and the greateſt Worthies among the Saints have been Martyrs and Confeſſors; and in the pureſt Times of the Church, Chriſtians and Chriſtianity were ſo low, that they were the Scorn of the *Jews* and Heathen, and accounted the Off-ſcouring of all things; yea the Lord of Glory was under the power of not only *Pilate* but the meaneſt of his Souldiers, to wound and mock him at their Pleaſure.

Alas! What Glory is it for one Man, one *Party* to tread on the Neck of another? But this is a Vanity, a Folly we are too well acquainted with, yet the worſt of all is, that Men value themſelves by it as the *better* Men, and the weak World ſtrike in with the Conceit as ungrounded and fooliſh as it is. *Proſterum ſcelus virtus vocatur.* The People will commonly take them to be beſt who are uppermoſt; and if Chriſt be on the Croſs, the unthinking Vulgar will repute him a great Malefactor. Let not the wiſe Man glory in his Wiſdom, nor let the mighty Man glory *in his Might, nor the rich Man glory in his Riches.* What then ſhould they glory in? In underſtanding and knowing God, to exerciſe Loving-kindneſs, Judgment and Righteouſneſs in the Earth, and to have that ſenſe of him, as to govern our Spirits by ſo juſt and benign a Pattern. Jer. 9. 23.

Thirdly, *It reproves thoſe who follow their Inclinations and Paſſions without conſulting their Superiors,* i. e. *their Underſtandings and Conſciences.*

Certainly ſuch Men who wear their Spectacles only in their *Pockets*, or forget to open their *Eyes* when they move on a Precipice, are as wiſe and ſelf-conſiſtent as theſe. There are a ſort of People in the World, whoſe Paſſions ſally out without Direction,

Cor-

Correction, or Self-examination: The *Egyptians* painted an inconſiderate Man with the Globe of the Earth before him, and a Looking-Glaſs behind him.

Jer. 2. 24. Theſe are the *wild Aſſes uſed to the Wilderneſs, who ſnuff up the Wind at their Pleaſure, who feed upon*

Iſa. 44. 20. *Aſhes; a deceived Heart hath turned them aſide, ſo that they cannot ſay, is there not a Lie in my right Hand?* They abandon Reaſon as an uſeleſs thing, or as a Rub in that way which they are reſolved in right or wrong: This is (I will not ſay unchriſtianing, but) *unmanning* themſelves.

He that beſt knows the Nature of ſuch Degenerates, gives them their due Characters and proper Names;

Pſ. 49. 20. and tells us, that *Man that is in Honour, and underſtandeth not, is like the Beaſts that periſh.* Let a Man be accompliſhed with any or all the titular Dignities that other Men can put upon him; if his Underſtanding be not his Maſter and Tutor; if he caſt off thoſe Reins of Government, conſult nothing but his own Intereſt (as Men love to call their unreaſonable Appetites) he conforms to the Brute, proſtitutes himſelf to his Senſuality, as if he had to do with nothing more noble and worthy. *But what*

Jude 10. *they know naturally as brute Beaſts, therein do they corrupt themſelves.* Under this Cogniſance the Lord

Amos 4. 1. takes them; *Hear this Word ye Kine of Baſhan.* Upon this Text one gives this Paraphraſe; *Great Men who conſult not their Underſtandings for the Conduct of their Actions, are but great Beaſts.* And ſuch Beaſts are little Men too, who follow the ſame Tract, only they are of the leſſer Herds of Cattel. *Be not like the Horſe or the Mule without Underſtanding, that muſt be held in with Bit and Bridle.* He that is ſo unlike a Man as to have nothing to do with

his

his Understanding deserves the Bit and Bridle of a Horse: If he will not rule his own Spirit by his own Vertue, he must be ruled with the Bit and Bridle of an outward restraint from another Hand. *Non caret regiâ Potestate, qui corpore suo noverit rationabiliter imperare: That Man* (and that Man only) *who knows how to govern himself by his own Reason, needs no Royal Authority but his own.* Aust. in Sent.

Fourthly, It reproves those, *whose blind and froward Will and Affections fight against and master the Dictates of the Understanding, and Authority of their Consciences.* To go on carelesly *without* consulting our Understandings, and what Directions it may afford us, is a Contempt of the Law of our Duty, and the means of our Welfare: but to act *against* them is Presumption, Scorn, and flat Rebellion against God in our Consciences. It is a *black* Brand on those of whom it is said, *These are of them who rebel against the Light, they know not the Ways thereof, nor abide in the Paths thereof*: But if 'tis said, *they know not the ways thereof*; so that 'tis at *most* but a Sin of Ignorance: I answer, no such matter! They *know* but will not *acknowledg*; they behave themselves *notwithstanding* their Knowledg, as if they were *utterly* ignorant, which is an high Aggravation of their Sin: and when by God Men are *judicially* given up to this Spirit, 'tis a Token of his highest Displeasure in this World, a Reservation in those Chains of Darkness, which are like to hold them till the Judgment of the great Day. *For the Wrath of God is revealed from Heaven against all Ungodliness and Unrighteousness of Men, who hold the Truth in Unrighteousness.* Job 24. 13.

Because that which may be known of God (i. e. his Being and their Duty) *is manifest in them, for God*

hath ſhewed it unto them. In ſhort, they oppreſſed and fought againſt their Light till they put it quite out, and all in favour of thoſe unruly Affections and Luſts, which by it were made *uneaſy* to them. For this Rebellion againſt their Light God gave them their Swing, and left them to embrace without *controul* the groſſeſt Follies, and moſt unbecoming rational Creatures. That Advice of an Heathen therefore, *reverere ſeipſum*, was the Voice of a *wiſe* Man; for he that hath not an awful regard of the Light and Authority of his own Underſtanding and Conſcience, is a *diſſolute* Wretch, who hath burſt the Bands, and broken the Cords, by which the ſupreme and ſovereign Authority holds Men to their Duty to him, to their Neighbour, and themſelves.

Fifthly, *It reproves them who abandon themſelves to the arbitrary Conduct of others without concerning their own Judgments and Underſtandings, in the Tryal of its Truth or Goodneſs.* And I muſt ſay that of all Men they run moſt headlong into Error and Unmanlineſs, who will be at no farther Pains to conſider what becomes them in *their* Places, what to entertain as their *Opinion*, what in their Practice; than only what ſuch a Man ſays and does, whoſe Reaſons may be as weak, whoſe Authority as little, and Motives as unreaſonable as their own. We decry the giving up our *Judicium Diſcretionis*, and yet do it where there is not the leaſt Shadow for it to a conſidering Man: What Advantage is it to decline our our own Ignorance and inordinate and irregular Appetitions, and follow anothers blind-fold. The Authority and Examples of a good and wiſe Man ought to weigh ſomewhat with us; but not ſo much as to determine us without farther Examination. God

 alone

alone is ſo wiſe as not poſſibly to be miſtaken, and ſo good and juſt as he cannot injure his Creatures: a perfect and abſolute deference to him is our duty and ſafety. I will thank my fellow-ſervant to lend me his eyes, that I may ſee better with mine own: but, I will not ſo abuſe his eyes as to put out mine own. God hath given to every Man a Guide in his *own boſom*, which with all other helps is to be his *immediate* Controuler and Director. I know not any commiſſion we have to devolve its office upon a proxy. It is as reaſonable, and as *eligible*, to commit it to others to eat and to drink for us, as to *underſtand* for us. *Let every Man prove his own work; then ſhall he have rejoycing* in *himſelf alone, and not in another.* Gal. 6. 4.

But I would not forget to mind thoſe, whoſe Luſts and Paſſions have miſled and dethroned their own Judgments, and Conſciences; and yet are not *ſo content*, but give up themſelves to a ſort of Men, who are greater Maſters of Miſrule, and Doctors in Debauchery and Vice; that they wofully tranſgreſs this Doctrine of the excellency of a Mans governing his own Spirit. Is it not enough, and infinitely too much, for a Man indued with reaſon to turn Rebel, and ſubdue it by his own unreaſonable appetite; but he muſt call in the greateſt offenders againſt this Law, and ſubmit himſelf wholly to their conduct? How many in our day go to ſchool to learn the Art of ſinning more ſinfully, and chuſe ſuch wicked Companions for their patterns, who are moſt perfect in Villany, and can with the moſt ſcorn, and leaſt ſenſe of all that is venerable, not only ſatisfie, but *inflame* their Pride and Luxury, and all Licentiouſneſs! Certainly if it be an unmanly error, to follow the tract of the better ſort of men without examination; be-

cauſe they may be miſled themſelves, or miſlead others by their own Paſſions: It is a Crime, an Enormity for which no name is bad enough, to give up our ſelves to the miſrule of the worſt of Men; and for this very cauſe or motive, that they are more wicked; and can give us Inſtructions and Examples of Sinning, and gratifying our corrupt Affections above our ſelves, or any others.

Laſtly, *It reproves thoſe above all others, whoſe Judgments and Underſtandings are given up and proſtituted to the ſervice of ſinful paſſions.*

This is a moſt lamentable inverſion of that *Order*, which God hath created in his creature Man; a turning it *up-ſide down*, a moſt direct and diametrical oppoſition to the Divine Inſtitution. It is Man's Excellency to rule his own Spirit by a ſanctified Reaſon: but he is ſo far faln from that, his Reaſon ſo unſanctified, as to turn it into a Slave and Vaſſal to his Luſts.

This Men do, when their Underſtandings have nothing to do, but to make Proviſion for the Fleſh to fulfil the Luſts thereof, and when that is done, to juſtify and turn Advocate for Sin.

The Scriptures give us many ſad Inſtances of this, of a whole *Generation that are pure in their own eyes,* Prov. 30. 12. *and yet are not cleanſed from their filthineſs.* Their Judgments are ſo far polluted, as to juſtify them from any *degree* of Faultineſs in the greateſt degrees of *Pollution.* Jer. 4. 22. It tells us of Men that *are wiſe to do Evil, but to do Good have no Knowledg.* And what is this but a total giving up their Underſtanding to plot, and contrive the gratifying of ſinful Paſſions; a Sagacity, and reach, a cunning for nothing elſe. This is the Wiſdom which *is not from above* (and whence 'tis then you

you may gueſs) *but 'tis earthly, ſenſual, deviliſh.* Jam. 3. 15.
The Faculty of Underſtanding is from above, and placed in Man to tread under Foot theſe vile Affections; but ſo to abuſe it, as to be a Contriver for, a Promoter of what comes under any of theſe three Taints, is not from the pure Fountain above, but from the Sourſe beneath, the bottomleſs Pit of Sin, Folly and Miſery.

To have our Underſtandings ſo much abaſed, as to ſerve no higher Ends than earthly things, 'tis become a poor, low, reſtrained, impriſoned thing; it digs for Riches, but they are *earthly* Riches, Exceſſes of ſhining Clay, extention of Houſes, Lands, which one calls *Bona ſcabelli*, the good things of God's Footſtool, and ſuch as he has placed under our Feet. This is making our Underſtandings Slaves to the Sin of Covetouſneſs, which the only true God calls Idolatry. And tho Pride and Ambition look ſomewhat bigger than what may be tied up in a Bag, yet 'tis but earthly. *Nebuchadnezzar* thought his Wiſdom and Underſtanding had been bravely imployed, when it had raiſed ſuch a Morſel for his Ambition as his great *Babylon*; but God eſteemed him a Beaſt for uſing his Underſtanding no better, and turns him among the Herd to admoniſh himſelf and others to employ it better.

But to have our ſuperior Faculties ſerve mere Senſualities, is yet a greater Abuſe. This is for Man to become *brutiſh in his Knowledg*, which is complained of by God as a woful Degeneracy. For a Man to ſlave his Underſtanding, to provide what may moſt gratify the Luſts of the Eye, and the Luſts of the Fleſh, by a voluptuous eating, drinking, wea- Jer. 10. 14.

ring, hearing, and the touches of Uncleanneſs, is more baſe than Beſtiality it ſelf; for though the higheſt of their Heaven be the gratifyings of Senſe, they know their *Meaſure*, and where left to themſelves, act moſt exactly according to that Law of Self-preſervation, and what is peculiar to their ſeveral *Species*, for their delights.

Yet Mens Underſtandings ſink lower, even to drudg to *Deviliſm*; to contrive for, and to juſtify Envy, Revenge, Enmity, Cruelty, all manner of Miſchief; yea, to turn Tempters to Soul-damning Sin, and taking pleaſure in tormenting (not Beaſts, but) Men. I forbear to give Examples of theſe ſeveral degrees of Sin, which have devoured Mens Underſtanding and Conſideration in their Service. If I ſhould tell you of a *Craſſus*, a *Midas*, a *Demas*, an *Achan*, a *Judas*, who put Chriſt himſelf into his Bag; an *Alexander*, a *Julius Cæſar*, *Ahab*, *Jezebel*, *Nero*, *Sardanapalus*; ſome it may be would ſtay their thoughts in them, as if ſuch unreaſonable and reaſon-proſtituting Men were rare things: whereas indeed, this Diſeaſe is Epidemical, Common, and in ſome degree Univerſal.

But where this Crime is reigning, 'tis but playing the Fool with all our Cunning, and ſinning the more profoundly. To be brutiſh in our *Affections*, is very unbecoming a *rational* Creature; but to have our Underſtandings *approving* and ſerving brutiſh Luſts is far *worſe*; the greateſt degeneracy we are capable of in this World. And it ſeems as if intended to expreſs the *ne plus ultra* of the *poſſible* defection of Man from his Integrity, to have his *Mind and Conſcience defiled*, *i. e.* to have ſentiments, and give inſtructions agreeable to inordinate Affections: *If the*

Tit. 1. 15.

light

light that is in thee be darkneſs, how great is that darkneſs?

SECT. II.

We ſhall next conſider ſome Inſtructions to our Underſtandings this Doctrine affords us.

And firſt, it informs us *how we are to judg of Mens Excellencies, Goodneſs or Worthineſs.* Not by their Greatneſs and Might with reſpect to others, but by that Dominion they have and exerciſe over their *own Spirits.* He is an *Hero indeed* who is his own Maſter: He is a Grandee, and as good as he is great, that by his Underſtanding taking its Light from the Word of God, governs and keeps in order his own Affections. Such a Man has the Empire of a whole World, a *leſſer* World, but of more value than the *greater.*

They who judg of Goodneſs by ſuch outward Appearances as agree to common Opinion and mere Pageantry, judge according to Appearances, but not righteous Judgment.

Secondly, This informs us that there are but a few Men in the World that are excellent Men. *My Goodneſs extendeth not to thee,* (ſaith *David*) *but to the Saints that are on the Earth, and to the Excellent in whom is all my Delight.* But who are theſe Excellent ones? why they are *Saints,* ſuch who *exerciſe themſelves* (as the Apoſtle ſpeaks) *unto Godlineſs,* have their Heads and Hearts employed to the ordering their *Converſation aright,* both that *without,* and that *within*: Who are upright before God, and *keep themſelves* from *their Iniquity.* But theſe are a very few comparatively. Among the Throng of

Pſ. 3. 16.

1 Tim. 4. 7.

People that are in the world, 'tis the Lot of but a few to be Noble, Rich or Great; and I fear 'tis the choice of fewer to be in good earnest in this cumberſom unpleaſing work to the Fleſh, of ruling their own Spirit. In all Places and Societies of Men, unruly Spirits baniſh the Delight and Profit of Chriſtian and humane Converſe, and make but an ill-favoured Repreſentation of Chriſtianity. 'Tis a rare thing to meet with a Man whom you ſhall be ſure to find in the Path of Reaſon and Chriſtian Duty, who needs no other Motives to be what he ought to be, than what he carries alway in his own Boſom. And I would I could ſay of Profeſſors of the *Fear of God*, that they were *generally* a People of this Excellency commended, ſuch as have *crucified the Fleſh with its Affections and Luſts*; whoſe enlightned Underſtandings and Conſciences had a powerful Influence to reſtrain their Paſſions, when under no Temptation but of natural Humours. True Notions of Truth and Duty, a Track of Ordinances, with ſome profeſſed Approbations of the things that are excellent, is the utmoſt Limit of moſt Mens Religion. What Crookedneſs, Perverſeneſs, Worldlineſs, Senſuality, Pride, Frowardneſs were the Symptons of their unbridled Spirits long ſince, continues the ſame, and are more unchanged than their Faces: Their Graces ſeem powerleſs, and ſhort of the Effects of *moral* Vertue: yea good Nature, or good Breeding have much a fairer *Appearance*, and render their Societies who riſe no higher (at leaſt) leſs offenſive. There may be true Grace *within*, Charity may ſuggeſt ſo much, when 'tis as a Candle in ſo *foul* a Lanthorn, as not only its *uſeful Shine* is withdrawn, but alſo its *being* there is al-

moſt

moſt inviſible. But let me make bold to tell Profeſſors, that have no better Proof of their being *delivered from the Power of Darkneſs, and tranſlated into the Kingdom of the dear Son of God*, that they put their eternal Eſtate to a very great hazard.

Thirdly, This Doctrine informs us, *how happy and bleſſed the Heaven of the Bleſſed will be.* There will be this Goodneſs in its Perfection, there will be no pricking Briars nor grieving Thorns of unmortified unbridled Paſſions in others, or our ſelves. Into that place ſhall enter nothing that doth offend. Every thing that is crooked here, ſhall be found ſtreight there. Humour, carnal Intereſt, Flattery, Opinion are not the Byaſs of that thorowly reformed World. All there is naked Plainneſs and perfect *Beauty*, that needs none of the Maſques and Diſguiſes which Men uſe here to cover thoſe Diſorders in their Affections, which they have no Will, and therefore no Power to cure.

This World is not worth the living for, 'tis ſo rude a thing; Men who by Nature are fitted for delightful and uſeful Society, are become the moſt degenerate and troubleſom of the whole Creation. We know not where to be, but we find it a *Meſhek* or a *Kedar*. How gladded will a Soul, diſpoſed for, and aſſured of that bleſſed Reſt, be at its Departure from ſo much Uneaſineſs from others, and from remaining Corruptions in her ſelf, which as more near, and more its *own Guilt*, is more her own Diſeaſe and Grief? It is one of the good, if not of the beſt Improvements we can make of all the Evils we know, or do, or ſuffer here; to raiſe thereby the Price of Heaven in our Hearts, where none of that Diſorder, Deformity and Bitterneſs will be found: And of

what

what Sparks or Drops of good we ſee, or taſte here, to raiſe the Price of Heaven in our Hearts by conſidering, that all this Goodneſs will be there in Perfection. This will be the way to make our Mercies and Comforts more ſweet and comfortable, and our Afflictions, yea our very Sins, leſs imbittering our Days.

The third Improvement we ſhall make of this Doctrine, will be of ſuch things it puts us on the practice of.

Firſt, To call over the Records of our Memories and Conſciences, that we may inform our ſelves how far, and wherein we are faln from this Excellency, the Rule of our own Spirits. It is certain that God inveſted Man with it in his firſt Creation, and as certain he never gave to any an Authority to diveſt us of it, nor have we his Warrant to neglect it, or diſcharge our ſelves. We had once a Right to this *Empire* of our own Spirits, and the Poſſeſſion alſo: But woe is us! 'tis *loſt* and hath been ſo time out of mind. If God ſhould now demand of us an Account of our *ſelves*, how we have conſerved this Truſt, and maintain our Authority in its Vigour; what Anſwer ſhould we make to the Supreme Lord? Alas we have cared ſo little for theſe things, that we can give no Account of them; they have not fallen under our Obſervation; we have not charged our ſelves with them as any part of the Province committed by the great Sovereign to our Cuſtody. Our Wills have taken no Meaſures from our Underſtandings, nor our Underſtandings from that Law of the whole Creation, *ſcil.* to ſerve the Ends of

of our Being. There hath been an universal Conspiracy against the Divine Right, and that Order he has commanded. Not only our Love, Hatred, Joy, Sorrow, Desire, Aversation have been licentious and run riot, been a Sort of *Self-movers*; but our Wills and Understandings also have quit their Posts, and like treacherous Counsellors and Commanders in an Army, have taken part with, and headed a Mutiny. We came into this World like corrupted troubled Springs, and have fallen in with the Stream of this *Folly*, and followed its Current into the dead Sea of Sin and Vanity, we knew not how nor asked why. If the case is so, as certainly it is, or hath been so, and is so in too great a degree with the best. Then,

Secondly, Let this Doctrine, this momentous and so much a self-concerning Truth, put us upon resuming our Command and Rule of our own Spirits. Though we have lost the Power and Possession, we have not lost the *Right*, nor is the Possession *irrecoverable*. Look into the holy Scriptures, there thou shalt find the Records of thy first Rights, and the true Constitution of self-Government, with all the Helps thou canst desire to set it upon its Legs again, with a greater Encouragement and Advantage than thou hadst at the Beginning. And though thou mayest not expect wholly to reform the Disorder all thy days: yet so much may be done by the Grace of God which offers it self to thee, as may render thee through Christ acceptable in the Sight of God, thy Life more righteous, orderly, comfortable, and useful to thy self and others, and thine End blessed. Rouse up thy self therefore, let thy Reason (submitted and devoted to God) take the Throne, lay its Commands on thy Affections, and force their Obedience: *Keep thine Heart*

Pro. 4. 23. מכל משמל above all keeping.

Heart with all Diligence, take a daily, an hourly, a continual Account of all its Motions: Restore to thy Conscience its Office of directing, examining, accusing, excusing, and encouraging. Live like a Man, a Christian in good earnest, that has something to do with the World, but *more* with thy self, and the Concerns of thy Soul with God. That this may be done, and *how* it may be done in some good measure, I shall propose shortly some Motives and Directions for thine Assistance. In the mean time I shall put thee upon one Task more, to which this Doctrine obliges thee.

SECT. IV.

Put a Remark upon the Disorders in the Spirits of others, more especially in thine own, with their Causes, that renders the World involv'd in so much Confusion, and wherein this great Duty of Self-government is most neglected, and most apparently injured.

I shall endeavour to give a Prospect of some few of them, and leave you to enlarge by your own Observation.

First, It appears in the perverse and contentious adhering to whatever is our own.

Alas! what proper rational Evidence is there of Worth or Goodness in any thing because it is *ours?* Because 'tis our Opinion, our Party, our Relation, our Interest? Yet under this only Consideration, or rather from these Motives without any farther consideration, not only the above-named, but our very Sins, Lusts and Follies are passionately espoused. If our Spirits were regulated as they ought, we would love

love Truth as *Truth*, and Goodness as *Goodness* wherever we find it: and what is contrary should have none of our Countenance. *Nebuchadnezzar* would needs have the Image in the Plain of *Dura* worshipped by all, because it was of *his* setting up. Dan. 3. The Disciples of Christ had not well learned what the best of Masters taught them, when they would have *their* Mouths stopped who followed not *them*, and for no other cause. I am of *Paul*, and I of *Apollo*, and I of *Cephas*, and I of Christ was no Symptom of well-govern'd Spirits among the *Corinthian* Professors of Christianity. And if the Order wherein these Parties are expressed may signify any thing 'tis this, that where Men prefer in the *first* place their own Passions, Christ will be so far put behind as to become *last* of all. But these things, and their being *puffed up for one against another*, were their Follies, and so notorious Follies and unbridled Passions, that the Apostle does not nakedly say they were *carnal*; but makes them their own Judges, puts it to their own Consciences if they were not so; *Are ye not carnal?* It was the early Christians of whom the Apostle said, *All Men seek their* own, *not the things that are Jesus Christ's.* But this (you will easily believe) was not written for our Imitation, but for our Caution. 1 Cor. 3. 3. Phil. 2. 21.

Secondly, This unruled Spirit appears in Mens Impatience of Contradiction however reasonable. Men when having obtained some Reputation for Learning, Wisdom, Parts, *&c.* a Spirit of Pride sensually plucks the Reins of their own Spirits out of their Hands: They will rather run into twenty Errors in word or deed, than acknowledge themselves guilty of one, or leave him a Saver that will not go out of the way with *them*, as well as *in* it. Who

Who would think that ſo many ſhould be ambitious of being thought infallible themſelves, who ſeem to be ſo much againſt that Character on any? *Vain Man would be wiſe, tho he be born as a wild Aſſes Colt.* It were well if he would *be* ſo: But the Senſe is, he would be *thought* ſo, and is more fond of being thought ſo, than of being ſo *indeed.*

Job 11.12

How impatient was *Zedekiah* of Contradiction, that he could not forbear in the preſence of two Kings, and many Princes and Nobles, to ſmite *Micaiah* (that honeſt *Tell-Truth*) on the Cheek. This was certainly a Token that the Spirit of the Lord was gone from *him* (whether it went to *Micaiah* or not) and that he had loſt alſo the Rule of his *own* Spirit. This impatience of Contradiction has been the cauſe of many a *feveriſh* Heat in ſome Men, from whoſe Examples might be expected the moſt eminent Patterns of *Humility.* And if we think this ungoverned Spirit is not to be found but in the *worſt* of Men, or at leaſt not to be found in thoſe we judg and rank among the beſt; we may ſooner or later find our ſelves *miſtaken.* Knowledg, or Learning and Parts, have not alway Grace growing up *equally* with them. I may be bold to ſay, that if Humility be the *Legitimate* Daughter of Knowledg, Pride is its Daughter too, tho I confeſs 'tis not Legitimate, but a *By-blow.*

Knowledg *puffeth* up, but Grace edifieth, *i. e.* Knowledg fills Men as a Bladder with that windy Vanity, but Grace makes Men truly Great and Good. Who would have thought that ſuch a Man as *Jonah* ſhould be ſo impatient of a *ſeeming* Contradiction to his Prophecy, from the Divine Pity it ſelf, and the imputation of a falſe Prophet, from the Conſtruction

Fools

Fools would make of that compaſſionate and tender Mercy, which is alway implied upon Repentance: Yet ſo it was, and ſo unequally, as well as feveriſh did his Pulſe beat, that he juſtified his Anger againſt God himſelf (for who elſe could he be angry with?) for ſmiting his Muſhroom Gourd, but could have had Patience enough, and it may be ſome *Pleaſure too*, to ſee his Prophecy *confirmed*, by the Deſtruction of ſo many thouſand Innocents (among greater Sinners) as dwelt in that great City *Nineveh*.

Thirdly, This ungoverned Spirit appears in Men's ſo eaſily ſhifting, and changing Opinions, Profeſſions, and Communions.

I do not, I dare not ſay, that when there is a juſt Evidence of our being in an Error, we muſt not change an Error for a *Truth*: That were to give unto a perverſe Stubbornneſs, the Honour of a well-principled Stability. I do not here concern my ſelf with thoſe who under any Profeſſion of Religion *whatever*, have no deſign above the low Things of this World. We muſt expect (ſay what can be ſaid) that ſuch will admit of no Godlineſs that croſſes worldly Gain. But I ſpeak of, and to, ſuch who do ſo eaſily ſhift and change Principles, and think they do their Duty, and give good ſatisfaction to God and their own Conſciences; and it may be take themſelves to be ſo much the better and more genuine Chriſtians.

Some who I hope are real Chriſtians (but I muſt needs ſay are very weak) if they hear a Man ſpeak good Words, and ſuch as it may be contain Truths worthy our acknowledgment; preſently grow fond of all that Perſon holds or practiſes in the matters of Religion. Is not ſuch a ſally of the Affections without Bit or Reigns, which a very mean Underſtanding may

may afford them? I would ask such, if they might not as reasonably turn to every Opinion of *every* Man, that saith somewhat more or less that affects them? and then they must, or *may* shift all Points of the Compass in a short time, and hold all true that any Man holds, who doth so far gratify them as was said before.

Others, when any thing is said to them for a new Opinion, or contrary to their old Sentiments, which they cannot answer presently; they forsake what they formerly held and professed, and upon good grounds too: Only they knew not how to manage them, and are captivated by the Assailant. If these are not *Children tossed to and fro with every wind of Doctrine*, Eph. 4.14. those words of Holy Writ have no meaning: For, let another deal with them *against* those Arguments that altered them *before*, and say more than they know how to answer; must they not face about as they *were*, or be as partial now, as before they were both weak and imprudent? Do these poor Souls rule their own Spirits, or their Spirits rule them? Or rather are they not neither ruling nor ruled, but poor passive indifferent things, roul'd to and again with a Breath? Do these People believe that all Truth stands on their Legs, and if their strength cannot support it, it must fall to the Ground and be an Error?

But I must drive it a little farther. These Persons (for the more part) are surely within the reach of some more *knowing*, and as *sincere* for Truth as themselves: And most of them (I suppose) have some or other Pastors, who by their *own Choice* have a particular Charge and Care of their Souls. I find but very *few* of them (upon such Temptations) who will have recourse to them, to try what satisfaction they can give

give them against the Adversaries Arguments, and to retain them in their former Principles. Doth not this give abundant evidence, that they are so far chain'd by their *precipitate* Choice of a *new Opinion*, that they are afraid of being better informed, and re-established? This is the very Truth of most of these Men's shifting Principles. And I dare say these Persons neither rule their own Spirits according to *their* Portion of Understanding, nor know what manner of Spirit they are of. And I will add, that beside their unfaithfulness to Truth and their own Souls; they cannot be excused from perfidiousness too, and wronging and grieving those who are over them in the Lord. And I pray God to furnish his Church with such Pastors, whose Knowledg may enable them, and whose Integrity may dispose them (like their Lord) to have pity on the Ignorant, and those who are out of the way; and to carry it with that sweetness of Love, Humility, Meekness, and Self-Denial; as may incourage poor Souls in their difficulties to expect their Help. I have said thus much not partially for this or that Persuasion in the Matters of Religion, but from an *impartial* regard to Souls, and their *stability* in the Truth.

Fourthly, It appears *in the prevalency of corrupt Passions, in giving and receiving Reproofs or Admonitions.* I must acknowledg, that it requires much of a Spirit of Wisdom, Love, Meekness, and Impartiality to discharge *either* of these parts becoming Christians: A wise Reprover, and an obedient Ear, seldom meet. There is a Humour runs in the Veins of all Men (few excepted) to have every Body under check but themselves; a strange inclination to, and fondness of a Self-Indulgence *Universal*, without regard to what is right or meet.

Moſes that Pattern of *ſingular* Meekneſs, reproves (with a Meekneſs like himſelf) a *Brother* Hebrew, from *brotherly* Love; *Why ſmiteſt thou thy Fellow?* The Text tells us that his Reproof was to him that *did* the *wrong*: Yet, he met with ſo ſharp, and ungrateful Reception, as made him flee his Countrey. A *ſad* Reward for his Charity! He was paid off with Wrong, and Revenge, and Railery: *Who made thee a Judg?* there's *Railery*. *Wilt thou kill me?* there's a falſe Accuſation: *As thou didſt the Egyptian Teſterday:* there's *Revenge* added to both the other. That advice of our Saviour, *Caſt not your Pearls before Swine, leſt they turn again and rent you*; ſeems to *moſt*, a ſufficient diſcharge from all *reproving*; Men are generally become ſo *Swiniſh*; having ſo little rule of their own Spirits. He that reproves, muſt not *only cloath* himſelf with Wiſdom, Love, and Meekneſs, but he muſt alſo *arm* himſelf with the greateſt Patience and Fortitude.

Exod. 2. 13.

Mat. 7. 9.

This difficulty and danger of reproving has turn'd Friendſhip into *unfaithful* Silence, or a more pernicious Flattery: But it is better to love with this Severity, than to deceive with Flattery. I have thought ſometimes to reſtrain Reproof to the *Pulpit*, would be the wiſeſt way in a Miniſter; Becauſe, that leaves the particular Application to the Hearer's own Conſcience: But, this tho the moſt wary, as well as authoritative, does not alway ſecure him from the charge of a falſe, or malicious Accuſer, of a particular Perſon, or Buſie-Body, tho he has neither had *that* Offender, nor any *particular* Perſon in his Thoughts: Of this many ſad and revengeful Inſtances might be given. Thus Men like fooliſh Children, hate, if not *break* the Looking-Glaſs, that ſhews them the *Dirt or Deformity*

mity of their Faces, but hereby they discover their Souls more foul and deformed. I have no small Opinion of that of *Bernard*, *Omnia enim in confessione lavantur, nisi quod ea quæ sponte dicunt aliis, ab aliis patienter audire non possunt.* God will forgive all the Sins we confess; but not so, if we will not bear a Reproof from others *patiently*, for the Sins we confess of our own accord. Bern. in Serm.

The Reproved are commonly of the unruly Spirit we have observed, and much more might be said: But, the Reprover commonly is as little concerned to manage his Spirit in giving, as the Reproved in receiving the Rebuke. Some Persons have such an itch of reproving, that they *must* be at *that* work; and are as busy to seek it, as the Fly to find the sore place. These make other Mens *Sores* smart, to please and tickle their *own* Itch. Some Men reprove in Wrath and Anger, as if they hated the Persons more than the Vices they reproved.

——Licuit semperq; licebit
Parcere Personis, dicere de Vitiis.

And whereas Love and Wisdom would, that as bitter Pills are wrapped in *Gold*, and a sowre Portion made more tolerable by *sweetning*; so Reproofs should be prefaced with due Commendations, of the goodness and *worth* of the Person reproved, and Expressions of good Will, with all the mollifying terms the nature of the Fault, and the hope of the Cure will bear. This was the great Example of Christ the *divine Wisdom*, in five of his Epistles to the seven Churches of *Asia*; worthy to be considered by all in giving Reproof. But where is the Reprover that regards Rev. chap. 2. & 3.

gards ſo to govern his *own* Spirit? What Wrath commonly in the *Countenance?* What biting Words? What remembrances of former and other preſent Faults? What deafneſs to all juſt Juſtifications? What diſcompoſure and intereſtedneſs to Condemn? And as little Judgment and Charity to conſider and weigh with our ſelves before-hand, what may be ſaid for the Perſon ſuppoſed Faulty, by which we ſhould put our ſelves in his Caſe. It was an excellent Spirit appeared in the Church of *Rome*, writing an Epiſtle of Reproof to the Church at *Corinth*: I will give you a *ſhred* for a Sample. *Hæc Clariſſimi, non tantum ut vos officii veſtri admoneamus ſcribimus, ſed ut nos ipſos commone faciamus; In eodem enim ſtadio verſamur, & certamen idem nobis impendit. i. e.* Dear Brethren, We write theſe things, to adviſe *not you only* of your Duty, but with you *our ſelves* alſo: For indeed, we are in the ſame Fault with you, and labour under the ſame Diſeaſe and Difficulties. To conclude, I know no Action wherein Men do ſo rarely on the active or paſſive part, ſo much as deſign to govern their own Spirits: For which cauſe, Reproofs ſeldom are given but it comes to a down-right Quarrel, and wounding, inſtead of healing, is the work on both Hands.

Plato had indeed the art of reproving an *ill-taught* Reprover, and ſtriking the Quarrel dead with one ſoft, but *heavy* Blow. *Diogenes* the Father of the Cynicks, that is, of the croſs-grain'd, unmannerly Humouriſts, who are for pleaſing no Body but themſelves; He being in *Plato*'s Lodgings, and ſeeing there a delicate Bed, and very rich, gets him up with his dirty Feet on the Bed, and tramples it to its great diſcompoſure, and prejudice, crying out; *Now I tread under Foot Plato's Pride.* *Plato* with a compoſed, and

Diog. Laer in vit.

and mild Countenance only returns those words, *with greater Pride.*

Fifthly, *This unruled Spirit among Men, appears in the great Incongruity of Men's Understandings, Professions, Approbations, and their own Practices: without much burden to, or complaint of themselves.*

The Truth is, the World is full of Knowledg, and Christianity mightily advanced among us, if its Confines reached not to either *Heart or Life*: But, Wisdom both Human and Divine, which is the *practick Knowledg*, is sunk to a very low ebb. But what is the matter, that Men look so high, and live so low? talk like Men, like Saints, or Angels, and walk like Crabs? It is because they are not concerned in ruling their own Spirits; *Affections inordinate* have gotten the Mastery, and keep *quiet* Possession. It hath been said of the *Grecian* Stage-Players, that for that *Stage-turn* they had so furnished themselves with excellent *Sentences*, that honest and wise Men were ashamed to use them, after such Slaves to their Lusts, had so *defiled* them.

Certainly, they who consider what Christianity is commended to us in our Bible, how we generally commend, and pretend to have a dear and awful respect to it; and also how *contrary* and unbecoming it our Deportment to God and Men are: I say, such will conclude that either we understand not our Bible, or do not believe it; or we have no care to govern our Spirits. It is true, that the best of Men come short of their Knowledg in their Lives: The Apostle *Paul* himself saith, *To will is present with me, but how to perform that which is good I know not.* But as the first was his *Choice* and Delight, the latter was his *loathing and burden*; which vented it self in that Rom. 7.

Groan, *O wretched Man that I am! Who ſhall deliver me from the Body of this Death?* I take it to be neither boldneſs nor uncharitableneſs to affirm, that where with the Knowledg, the *Grace of God is in Truth*, tho there may be, and *is* too great a Non-conformity of the Practice to the Underſtanding, and the taint of natural Corruptions will not be *quite* wrought out; yet, there is a *ſincere* deſign, a *purpoſe of Heart*, to reduce outward Acts, and inward Diſpoſitions to a conformity to our Underſtandings, and that where it is ſo, there will be apparently *ſome* Bridle of Reſtraint: Pride, Anger, Frowardneſs, Covetouſneſs, Hatred, Contention, and other enormous Luſts, will not riot it, and have ſo free and beaten a Road, as where there is no ſuch Self-Rule ſincerely determined.

There will be a Change for the better, a *ſtated* endeavour to purify our ſelves even as God is pure. Where Men underſtand the proper ways of their Callings, and that they are neceſſary to anſwer the ends of a comfortable living in the World, and yet are not to be found ordinarily in them, but in Idleneſs and ill Haunts, *deſtructive* to thoſe Ways and Ends: Every wiſe Man will conclude ſuch to be a ſort of diſſolute Perſons, *i. e.* ungoverned looſe Men: ſuch as have disbanded themſelves from under the Authority of their Underſtandings, in *thoſe* Concerns. It is no leſs a reaſonable Concluſion, where the caſe is alike in Matters of Religion and our Eternal Concerns. And that there is ſuch a looſeneſs among Profeſſors this day, from the Paths that are profeſſedly leading to our Duty and true Felicity, needs no *ſecret* Search, no *elaborate* Enquiries to find the ſad proof of.

Sixthly, It appears, *in the unreaſonable and ſudden Alterations wrought on Mens Spirits, by not only great,*

but

but ſmall Changes and Provocations. By nothing more than this, is the unruline ſs of Men's Spirits to be diſcerned. Where is the Man that is *ſemper idem?* that has ſuch a Poiſe on his Spirit, that he ſinks not under a Change to Adverſity, or over-ſets not with a ſtiff Gale of Proſperity? *I ſaid in my Proſperity, I ſhall never be moved: Thou didſt hide thy Face, and I was troubled.* As good a Man as he was that ſaid it, he ſaid no more than what he had proved in his own *unruly* Heart: It was lifted up ſo high upon the weak moveable Waters of the World, that he had an unworthy Confidence in, and Opinion of his Stability on ſo *poor* a Foundation: It ſeemed to be a ſudden *tranſport* of mind. But when God frown'd on him by *adverſe* Providences, what became of his Confidence? where was his Mountain? He then had a Heart melted like Wax, his Spirit was as *Water* in a Storm all *diſordered.*

It is ſaid of our *Engliſh* Nation, that they hurry from one extream to another, are alway Strangers to *Moderation.* I was ſo ſelf-indulging as not to believe it a long time, I took my own Nation (as plain Country People do) to be every way *worthy*, becauſe it was mine *own.* But if this laſt Age hath not proved us more than *diſpoſed* to Extreams, no Nation ever was proved ſo. Indeed we have been all in a *Paſſion* this Fifty Years and more. One Bucket is on the Seat, 'tother at the bottom of the Well. The Ball is gotten to this end of the Street, and there's the Shout *now*, and by and by to the other end, then the Shout is *there*; and they that Shouted before are *Dumb*, and have ſcarce Heart enough to keep them on their Feet. This is not the Spirit of the *Boys only*, 'tis theirs that

are old enough to be Men. We cannot but play the *Child*, when we are mightily pleaſed, but when *otherwiſe*, we are all in the Dumps, or murmur; and 'tis well if God himſelf have a good Word from us.

If we conſider *another* manner of Humour: When Men have gotten *Power*, then nothing but Tyranny, Domineering, Scorn, and Contempt of all *Mankind* except their *Superiors*: A Spirit full of Revenge and Cruelty; nothing more pleaſant than to make *them*, *eſpecially* who have wronged them, *feel* how big they now are, by laying all their weight on them, that they may expire in Groans. But let theſe very Men become *low*; their Hearts are in their Heels, no bigger than a Peaſe; they are ſhrunk into the moſt ſlaviſh, flattering Abjects imaginable: Such a puſillanimity is there among Men. And I know not how to reflect on ſuch, as Men whoſe Superior Souls are any great Counſellors or Commanders in their little World, or that Spirits ſo eaſily moved, or ſo far removed by outward Changes, can be truly Great, or well managed by the Judgment and Underſtanding.

Seventhly, This unbridled Spirit appears *in Mens purſuit of the World*. No bounds are given to the *meaſure*, nor means for obtaining it. The Word *enough* is one of the moſt *unintelligible* in our Dictionaries. The Heart, Head, all the Powers are *inſlaved* to *its* intereſt. It hath uſurped the Place of God Himſelf. Men take all meaſures by it in matters both Civil, and Eccleſiaſtical: Love and Hatred, Court and Contempt, riſe and fall at its beck. It anſwers all things, as far as the moſt violent Paſſions can carry it;

it, which are become its perfect *Slaves*. In this Argument there is Field-room enough to fill a Volume.

I would only ask a few Questions, and they are, What thinking Men say, preach and print of the Weight, Worth and necessity of that *Measure* of the World (if that word may pass for the present) which Men press unto? the Means and Spirits laid out to obtain it? the value of it when the most is made of it that can be possible? Really there is so general a Consent to what the Scripture speaks of its Vanity to those great Ends of Satisfaction, its Snares to intangle in all Evil, its Fumes and Vapours to intoxicate Men both seeking and finding it, desiring and possessing it; that we may call it by all the *hard Names* imaginable, charge its Idolatrizers with setting their *Eyes* and Hearts *on that which is not*, with all the Folly, Wrong to God, Ruin to their *own Souls* we can express: All Men generally (that pretend to Religion or Reason) will say *Amen* to't, and (it may be) the Conscience of *Guilt* in this matter, and the Heart resolved notwithstanding to *continue* it, shall send forth a *faint Sigh*, and go away a little sad for the *present*, as the young Man after he had heard from Christ what was not fit for *his* turn.

Now considering that the things of the World are (at best and worst) such, and all consent to't, when their Judgments and *Consciences* speak; Where is the Rule and Government of Mens Spirits, that are so perfectly, violently and constantly contrary to those Sentiments? What Account can they give to themselves? or do they dare to call themselves to any Account at all in *this* matter? Certainly the God of this World cannot but laugh and triumph at this almost universal Folly and Madness, whereby Men with wind

wind and ſtream are hurried on to ſerve his *malicious* Ends. *Quem Deus pro malis ſuis abjicit, fit Diaboli pabulum; quapropter ſi ineſcam inimici dari nolumus, non debemus eſſe terreni: Quia ſic in Principio maledictus eſt, ut terram comedat.* They whom God rejects, are the Devils Prey. Therefore if we would not be devoured by that Enemy, it becomes us to take heed of earthly-mindedneſs; becauſe the Devil was in the Beginning curſed to have the Earth for his Morſels. A little grain of Salt for the ſtrain of Wit uſual with (otherwiſe) great Men in their day, and it carries in it a ſubſtantial and uſeful Truth.

Caſſiodorus in verba, *Omnia te expectant.*

Eighthly, *In Anger*, *Luſt and Revenge*: I joyn all three under one Head; becauſe they are the three greateſt Furies in corrupted Nature; ſuch as of all others diſdain any Rule or Order; when once they have gotten the Bit in their Teeth. What a mad thing is Anger? He that cannot ſo rule his Spirit, as to preſerve it from being at all prevailed on by this Paſſion, in vain doth he hope afterward to correct it, till it has with the fierceſt Horſe run it ſelf out of Breath, or with the Waters broken over the Bank, ſpent their Torrent. This Paſſion is of all others the leaſt guilty of *Hypocriſy*, but of all others is the moſt impudent, for it expoſes its Fury in all the Features of the Face, in Looks full of Terror and threatning; a Tongue ſet on fire of Hell, Actions and Geſtures ſo uncomely, ſo inconſiderate, that it differs nothing from ſtark Madneſs, only in Duration. It is *Furor brevis*, it is ſo void of all Deference to the Underſtanding, that it will have an abſolute Soveraignty or *Tyranny*; All true it ſaith, all *Good* it doth, when 'tis moſt uncapable of either. *Nulli iraſ-*

irascenti sua Ira videtur injusta: And it hath one Quality peculiarly unreasonable, that nothing more inflames it than to be opposed with *Reason*. And certainly Men under this Distemper, if they had Power equal to their Passion, nothing would end it but the End and Destruction of its Objects. Therefore our Saviour makes it a degree of *Murder*. It is a dangerous Companion to our selves and others, fit to live no where but alone; *'tis better to live in a Wilderness than with an angry Woman. Make no Friendship with an angry Man, and with a furious Man thou shalt not go; lest thou learn his Ways, and get a Snare to thy Soul.* So far is an angry Person from the Rule of his own Spirit, that he is not fit for Society. Aust. Prov. 21. 19. Prov. 22. 24.

Lust, so far as it prevails, is no less a Sympton of an unbridled Spirit, of the Understanding dethroned. When once this Evil hath touched and infected the Heart, 'tis it *alone* possesses all the Powers. What became of *David*'s Piety or Humanity? What Token left of any thing of a Man of Understanding, much less of a Man after God's own Heart, when his inordinate Affection had fastned on *Bathsheba*? What did he stick at to accomplish and continue his unchast Desires. Give me *Dinah*, said *Shecem*, let the Dowry be what it will be. *Solomon* himself, a most wise King in his Youth, plaid the fool in his old Age, broke the Bonds of Duty and Loyalty to his God, Equity to his Subjects, and Prudence to himself; this Passion did so far divest him of the Rule of his own Spirit. That Expression of the Heathen Philosopher, of *Jupiter*, accounted the Supreme Deity, runs highest in this Evidence, and with that I shall conclude it; *Jupiter himself cannot love and be wise at once.* This is

a great Document, but Thanks be to God we have the Kowledg of a greater and a better Deity.

Revenge is as great an Uſurper on the Authority of the ſuperior Soul, an Uſurpation of what is peculiar to God and the Magiſtrate, and renders our Spirits as ungoverned by the Underſtanding as any other. It is one of the firſt Maſters of Miſrule that appears in the human corrupted Nature. Children before they can ſpeak, can fight, and ſhew ſad Tokens of what they would do, did not their Impotency rather than their *Innocency* reſtrain them. The World is in a continual Flame by the Heat of this unbridled Paſſion. If we are but diſpleaſed, our Minds croſſed, right or wrong, the cauſe juſt or unjuſt, all is one; the meaſure of Revenge is as little conſulted as the Cauſe. What mad work did *Simeon* and *Levi* make upon the *Shechemites*, left not a Man of them alive, after they had made ſo brotherly a Covenant, and brought them to profeſs their own Religion, and all for one Man's inordinate Affection to their Siſter. *Cain* would be revenged on *Abel*, for being a better Man than himſelf, and more accepted of God. *Haman* would revenge *Mordecai*'s Contempt, with the utter Deſtruction of the *Jews*. Yea, *David* would leave neither *Nabal* nor any of *his* alive that could piſs againſt the Wall, becauſe he had a croſs Anſwer from a Churl by name and by Nature. All theſe Evidences (and many more that might be added) ſpeak plainly the *Unrulineſs* of Mens Spirits, what a poor ineffectual thing the Underſtanding and Conſcience is among Men. As it was before the Floud, the Earth is now filled with *Violence*, which Men *begin*, by firſt *violating* their own Underſtandings and Conſciences, by neglecting and rejecting the Government of their own Spirits.

CHAP.

CHAP. IV. SECT. I.

Five Motives to engage us to the Rule of our own Spirits.

FIrſt, *He that can rule his own Spirit, has the command of his own Peace.*

And if there be no Motive in this to the greateſt, and moſt difficult Undertaking, 'tis with the Unbelieving: For whoſe *Conviction*, I will firſt give downright, and down-weight Authority, *the Word of God: A good Man ſhall be ſatisfied from himſelf. Let every Man prove his own Work, ſo ſhall he have rejoycing in himſelf, and not in another.* This latter Text I have uſed in this Tract once, if not twice before, but I dare ſay 'twill not be worn out with many times uſing. I bleſs God it has been my daily Bread, and I have found it no light Food. 'Tis a bleſſed thing not to have our Peace in another's Power. While others take Fire like Thatch, by the Sparks of his Neighbours Houſe; this Man is like Matter that is not Combuſtible. Provocations are to him but as the Waves that daſh themſelves in pieces againſt the Rock; leaving it where, and what it was without change. Whatever Affronts a Man meets with from Men, he keeps his Peace 'till he loſes his *Patience. In your Patience poſſeſs ye your Souls.* It is a pitiful Slavery to have our Peace, and by conſequence our All (for what is any thing to us without *Peace*) in the Power of *others*, of others that are not in their *own Power*. What an eaſy and a light thing is it for another, for every mean, fooliſh, inſignificant Perſon to give us a bad Word, a wry Look, a neglect-

Pro. 14. 4. Gal. 6. 4. Joh. 4. 14. Luk. 21. 19

ful

ful ſcornful Behaviour, to wrong us in our Goods and good Name. If we have but the Rule of our own Spirits, a Power to guide them by Reaſon; how contemptible will all theſe Provocations be; how far from removing a weighty Soul, or working in it any Commotion or Diſturbance.

Secondly, He that rules not his Spirit, his Affections, loſeth the Rule of his better Part; His Underſtanding is fruitleſs to its principal End. As good have no Ears or Eyes, as not hear and ſee with them. As good have no Underſtanding, and better too, than to have it and not uſe it. It is the Underſtanding in which we excel the Beaſts of the Field, and the Fowls of the Air; in any other Faculty, what are we better than they. *Man that is in Honour, and underſtandeth not, is like the Beaſts that periſh.*

Yea I will add all the Accompliſhments a Man is capable of, (as the Ornaments or Powers of the Mind) are loſt, where a Man rules not his own Spirit. What is Learning good for, without teaching our ſelves; yea what are the Principles and Habits of Grace or Vertue (we ſuppoſe and profeſs our ſelves qualified with) good for, without being exerted to Self-government: In very deed good for nothing but to add to our Account, and render them and the Profeſſion of them a Contempt and Scorn to Men. But if we conſider ſtrictly our Affections, as they are qualified and move within our ſelves, they are capable of great Diſorder, and Obliquity or Sinfulneſs in relation to external Actions, that are materially good and laudable. Our Underſtandings and Conſciences have a greater Province to take care of, and Conduct than the *outward Face* of our Converſation, which is expoſed to the obſervation of Men. When this outſide looks fair,

the

the inside may be full of Rottenness & Deformity. Pride, Self-love, Vain-glory, worldly Interest, may run riot within. If our Spirits are not so govern'd as to have a conformity to the Rule, so far our superior Faculties are in vain and waste; can give no good Account to God of their Talent and Trust. Men judg the inside by the outside, but God judges the outside by the inside. *I the Lord search the Heart, and try the Reins. Every Man must give an Account of himself to God.* Jer. 17. 10. Rom. 14. 12.

Thirdly, That Man that rules his own Spirit, *is prepared to all Duties which he understands to be such, to all Injoyments, to possess them and dispose them honestly, holily, comfortably, for all Afflictions to bear them with Patience and Moderation, if not with Cheerfulness.*

Affections under the Conduct of our Understandings, habituated to its Rule, are not like unbroken Horses, full of Mettle, but for use and service utterly awkward and unfit, that must be brought to another pass before they will move readily in the Road and Path into which the Rider gently directs them. It is a pleasant and blessed thing for a Man to have his Spirit so tractable, that it will be led by the Conduct of the Understanding, and the Empire of a sanctified Will into its Duty, and from one Duty to another; as we can go out of one Room into another. Such regular Motions, without the Jadings and contradicting Frowardness of the Affections are exceeding beautiful and grateful to our selves, and also in the Eyes of God conform to the new Creature, which is said to be *God's Workmanship created in Christ Jesus unto good Works*, i. e. every way disposed to them. The imperfection of this Readiness was the Apostle's continual Grief; *To will is present with me, but how to perform that which is good I know not.* The inferior Soul did either rebel or hang backward. Eph. 2. 10. And

And as to our Injoyments, according to the Government we have of our Spirits, they will be ſerviceable to God's Glory, comfortable to our ſelves, uſeful to others. Men by being over-fond of outward good Things in Poſſeſſion, are rather ſmother'd than refreſhed by them. We may overlay our Mercies, and they alſo may overlay us, by our *overloving* them. Our Care to keep, and Fear to loſe them may turn them into pricking Briars and grieving Thorns; a Burden inſtead of a Bleſſing. Beſides immoderate Affections will make us ſo fond of them, that they ſhall neither be at God's Command, nor our Brothers need.

Whereas, having the Rule of our own Spirits, theſe *Servants* ſhal not become our *Maſters* nor our *Miſeries*. We ſhall give them their *Lodgings* where they ought to be; not in our Hearts nor Heads neither, farther than for Direction, but in our *Hands* to diſpoſe of; as Servants ought to adminiſter their Maſters Truſt, for his Service, at his *Pleaſure*, and their own *natural* Support.

This well-govern'd Spirit hath a ſweet Influence alſo on us, in reference to Afflictions. As our Pleaſures in Eaſe and Injoyments, ſo our Griefs under Croſſes will be moderate. Inordinate Paſſions on either part may be deadly. The weaned Child can look on the Breaſts it is *denied*, and in which it taſted before ſo much Sweetneſs, with a *contented Smile*.

Laſtly, *Every good Man and Woman doth ſincerely aim at that Rule of its own Spirit propoſed. The Law of God is in his Heart*, he would be what God would have him be. It is a vain thing for any to conclude their Eſtate good, their Character good who do not take Chriſt's Yoak on them, who uſe not their Underſtandings to direct their Wills, and mortify the Extravagancies and Corruptions of their Affections.

SECT.

SECT. II.

Twelve Directions and means for the obtaining the rule and government of our own Spirits. Direct. 1.

First, *A weighty and impartial Consideration.*

Consideration is near of kin to *reasoning*, but 'tis confined within our selves. It is the *exercise* of knowledg and reason, those faculties wherein the excellency of man shines above the meer animals. It is this that weighs in the ballance, and brings to the touch-stone that we may discern the quality and quantity of things we are concerned to judg of, and their true tendencies. Without it we are uncapable of Law or Rule, and the due application of it. And there is this eminent difference between rational and irrational Creatures, that the later being conducted by instinct, they move by pure inclination almost as naturally and as necessarily as the fire upwards, and heavy bodies downward: Whereas man as a rational and intelligent being is committed by the wise Creator to the conduct of his Reason duly improved, to elect or reject as it represents, which necessarily requires Consideration. According to this *Seneca* gives this excellent sentence, *Tunc per rationem recte vives, si omnia prius existimes & perpendes & ex natura eorum dignitatem constituas.* Then a man lives according to Reason, when he first throughly weighs, then esteems all things according to the dignity of their nature. Senec. de Penæ pri. Virt.

The Scriptures abound with instructions to consideration, and charges all the wild sallies of the spirits of men upon the neglect of it. There must

be ſomewhat more than meer conſideration, but wirhout it there cannot be any thing truly regular and worthy a man. *Conſider her ways, and be wiſe.* Prov. 6. 6. *They conſider not that they do evil.* No wonder then Eccl. 5. 1. that they do not correct it. *The ox knoweth his owner, and the aſs his maſters crib, but Iſrael doth not know, my people doth not conſider.* The beaſts, yea the moſt dull and ſtupid of them will act at a more becoming rate than man without *conſideration.* What follows in the next Verſe, ſpeaks home to our purpoſe: *Ah ſinful Nation! a people laden with iniquity, ——they are gone away backwards.* An expreſſion of the moſt irregular and ungoverned ſpirits imaginable. A people moved wholly by corrupt inclination, perfectly contrary to what becomes a rational being. Iſa. 1. 3, 4

Direct. 2. Secondly, *I ſhall next adviſe to (at leaſt) a daily calling thy ſelf to an account, what order or diſorder thy affections have been under, and to put thy conſcience upon accuſing, excuſing, and obliging thee to a more correct and exact temper for the future, than that wherein thou haſt failed.* So doing will be a good token of a ſincere diſpoſition to a rectitude of ſoul, and the task will be more eaſie: Whereas on the contrary an omiſſion of it for a long time, will render thine heart more indiſpoſed to it, and the task of a due examination more difficult, if not impoſſible. Moreover, the preapprehenſion of this account to be made, and to which thou art ſo *ſpeedily* to be brought, will have its awe upon thy ſpirit, like the judgment ſpeedily to be executed. What the conſequence of putting afar off our account is, you have in that Text, *Becauſe ſentence againſt an evil work is not ſpeedily executed, therefore the heart of the ſons of men is fully ſet in them* Eccl. 8. 11.

them to do evil. God has made every man not only a governour but a *judg* to himſelf. *If we would judg our ſelves, we ſhould not be judged.* The faithful and timely diſcharge of this duty will have two happy effects, the curing our own unrulineſs, and preventing not only the eternal judgment, but alſo the temporal chaſtiſements of God. 1 Cor. 11. 31.

Thirdly, *Inquire effectually into the make and conſtitution of thine own ſpirit; and eſpecially to find out wherein thy ſpirit is moſt inclined to diſorder, what inordinate affection is moſt prevailing in thee.* Direct 3.

It is impoſſible that a man ſhould govern himſelf, that knows not himſelf in ſome competent meaſure. He that will order man or beaſt, muſt conſider the variety of their diſpoſitions, and uſe a diſcipline ſuitable to that variety; elſe he will act at the ſame rate of indiſcretion and diſappointment, as the Phyſitian who preſcribes but one and the ſame remedy and method for all Patients and Diſeaſes. But eſpecially look to thy ſpecial and more prevailing luſts, they or that, which may be called more *peculiarly thine* iniquity; the ſin that doth more *eaſily* beſet thee; the iniquity of thine *heels* (as the Scripture expreſſeth it) which dogs thee continually, and follows thee as conſtantly and near, as thine own ſhadow.

I was upright before him, and I kept my ſelf from mine iniquity. This was not only an effect of his wiſdom, but a ſpring of a good evidence, and a ſweet teſtimony in his own conſcience, that he meant honeſtly in his profeſſion of the fear of God. The Apoſtle adviſes that in our Chriſtian courſe we may anſwer the incouragements of ſo great a reward propoſed, and the examples of ſo many Wor- Pſ. 18. 23.

thics who were already crowned with it, that we
Heb. 12.1. would *lay aside every weight, and the sin that doth so easily beset us.* We must attend to the discharging our selves of all hinderances of our exact and speedy walking with God; but of that especially which with most advantage attacks us, and as it were beleagures us. He that is a good Charioter or Coachman, will have the bit, and the rein, and the whip too, for every horse; but he will lash most at the most dull, and keep the streightest rein, and strictest eye on the most unruly. It was notable counsel given by the King of *Syria, Fight neither with small nor great, but with the King of Israel.*
1 King 22. 31. He knew well that if his principal enemy, and he on whom the rest so much depended, were overcome, all the rest would soon be discouraged, routed, and flee. Certainly we may expect a much more easie victory over the disorders of any of our affections, if we once master our greatest disorder. *He that bridleth his tongue* (that master of misrule, that great Incendiary) *is able to rule his whole body.* You may easily apply it to the present purpose, whatever passion is most violent.

Direct. 4. Fourthly, *Watch continually:* Believe it, he that hath many fires going, had need watch that they pass not their bounds, and catch the whole house. The Devil our great adversary watches continually to do us a shrewd turn, by blowing up one passion or other into rebellion. It was no solœcism in the good old plain hearted *Latimer*, citing that Text,
1 Pet. 5.8. *Watch therefore, for your adversary the Devil walketh about, &c.* in his Sermon he bid his hearers learn somewhat of the Devil for shame, and that was to watch alway, and never be idle. Indeed we had

had need take heed that Satan never find us off our guard, or take us napping. Two things especially we should continually watch.

First, *All occasions of sinning.* We know, or may know what they are, and have been. *Watch —— that ye enter not into temptation.* It is little sign that he who knows what have been the occasions of the disorders of his spirit, and yet shall either *seek* them, or not *shun* them, has any hearty purpose to order his spirit and conversation aright. Consider seriously that accurate *advice*, *Enter not into the path of the wicked, and go not in the way of evil men; avoid it, pass not by it, turn from it, and pass away.* Prov. 4 14.

Secondly, *Watch the emotions of any affection from its due order.*

These the Apostle calls *the motions of sin that work in our members.* These motions are the sad experiments of the best of men. These were principally the evils under the sense of which that holy Apostle groaned; yet if they go no farther than those motions, 'tis no small degree of holiness and happiness, such a well governed spirit, as a *better* we are not like to attain, while it lodges in this earthly Tabernale.

But if we suffer the disorder of our passions to go on, 'tis as hard to curb them as the horse that has got the bit in his mouth, or to quench the flame, or cure the disease that has gotten head.

Principiis obsta, sera est medicina parata.

Men talk sometimes of plucking up the evils of sinful disorders by the roots, and at other times of a source of all sin in every person, and that 'tis like the Ivy in the wall that will never clearly out while the wall stands; reconcile these things who can.

Yet if a ſpirit of Wiſdom and Grace dwell in thy ſoul, ſet them on work to check thoſe motions at their firſt, and it will be a means not only to preſerve thee from obeying them to the fulfilling their luſts; but alſo to render their motions leſs frequent and violent; and the Tempter more diſcouraged from attempting what he finds cruſht in the egg, and but a labour in vain.

Direct. 5. Fifthly, *Be not diſcouraged, tho thou findeſt not deſired, or any ſenſible ſucceſs, at thy firſt attempts: No, tho thy affections are more ſinfully violent and troubleſome.*

Strong and powerful habits are not eaſily and ſuddenly vanquiſht. Some great and amazng encounter may ſo aſtoniſh them, that they ſhall ſeem *really dead*, when yet the beſt ſhall find they have too much life in them, and will ſoon have a reſurrection, tho not to their former ſtrength. The Apoſtle *Paul* in his Converſion had as great a blow, and as ſignal a violence from Heaven againſt all diſobedience to that Jeſus, whom before he hated and perſecuted, that one would think he ſhould have had every irregular affection wholly mortified; but his confeſſion and complaints inform us otherwiſe. Sometimes where a ſenſe of ſin and wrath is ſuddenly turned into the more powerful impreſſions of Divine love, and pardoning Grace; the joy in, and gratitude for ſuch a Salvation works the grace of love into a flame, that no ſin can ſtand before it, and all the affections crowd after this triumphing love, and budg not from a conformity to its ſtricteſt Laws. Yet after a while, when its fervor is a little ſpent, inordinate affections will find work enough to do for all her powers,

ers, for every grace, with whatever assistance from without, or from above.

But let us consider the ordinary case of attempting (and regularly too) the reducing our spirits to their duty, and bringing them under the Law of an enlightned and sanctified understanding; and we shall find that 'tis not to be done with a wet finger. The heart will be off and on; this holy purpose will make some advances, and it may be as many retreats; that it will be hard to find a foot of ground gain'd; the perverseness and resistance of these wretched habits may tire our best spirits in every incounter, to no purpose (as we may be tempted to think) this is apt to be wofully disheartning, but especially if we shall find our lusts and corrupt affections grow upon us in their motions, as fire by cold or wind grows more vehement. Wonder not at this: for Satan knows how precious a soul is, and will very unwillingly part with such a rich prey. He is the strong one that keeps the house, and will not easily be outed. But 'tis sport and triumph to him to see the vain attempts of poor cowardly fresh-water soldiers, who make a flourish, and brave essays at distance from foe or trouble; but a small inconvenience sends them home with a base dishonourable peace, clapt up to their enemies greater advantage, and to their own loss and shame.

I do not advise thee to measure the time, or charge of this great and so necessary a work, venture thy all of both: *So work out your salvation with fear and trembling*, and God will work *in you to will and to do of his own good pleasure*, to attempt and perform also. But however troublesome these

habits of inordinate affection, looſe affections may be which know not thee nor God for their maſter, yet when they have been once broken and tamed, how eaſie, how ſweet will the government of thy ſpirit be to thee? Habits of Grace will apparently prevail. The victory will recompence all the coſts with infinite advantage. Thou wilt not dream as before, but feel thy ſelf happy, and entered into that reſt which is the earneſt and Specimen of everlaſting reſt.

Direct. 6. *Let that ungoverned ſpirit you ſee in others, in all, or any of its inſtances, be one ſpecial glaſs wherein to behold the character of your own.* Alas, we cannot ſee our own faces in their proper colours, they are ſo near us. The *Spartans* were more politick than human, in their forcing the poor *Ilotes* their ſlaves to drink drunk, that their children ſeeing how unmanly, and monſtrous a thing a man in that caſe was, might abhor to be tardy of ſo groſs an evil. We have ſo many ſad repreſentations of unruly licentious ſpirits, and voluntiers in all manner of wickedneſs, that we need not be at the coſt and guilt of forcing ſome into that pit, we would preſerve our ſelves or others from. We have among our ſelves a cuſtom to put our garments on others backs (eſpecially on theirs who are much of our own make) to underſtand thereby the better how they will *become our own.* If we were but as wiſe and faithful in our ſoul-concerns, their health and beauty, as for our bodies, the world would ſoon be at a moſt ſenſible reformation. How ugly does wrath and paſſion, a moroſe, froward, uncultivated diſtemper look in another? and is not the ſame thing in our ſelves really as deformed? Who thinks

thinks that man or womans converſe worth having, or rather not to be avoided with ſome inconveniency, who is a thief, a lyar, a tale-bearer, a make-bate, revengeful, proud, contemptuous, a ſelf-lover and pleaſer only? If thou canſt find any of theſe bad qualities in thine own ſpirit, hate them as much as thou doſt the ſame in others; and ſo much the more as thou wouldeſt more fear to have the Plague or any noiſome mortal diſeaſe, to faſten on thine own body, than on any others.

I muſt yet acknowledg that this direction will help thee but little in thoſe diſorders of ſpirit that conſiſts in more ſpiritual evils; and as monſtrous and deadly as any of the former, *e.g.* forgetfulneſs of God, enmity to the power of Godlineſs, unbelief, inordinate love of the world, and the like. Either theſe cannot be ſeen by their ſymptomes, or will not look like deformities, til thine own ſoul be reformed, and thou art become a new creature, Gods workmanſhip, created in Chriſt Jeſus to good works. Til then the Word of God muſt be thy Glaſs, which knows not how to flatter or delude, and thine own conſcience, and the Spirit of God thy Monitors.

Seventhly, *Maintain in thy ſoul a ſenſe of the omnipreſence, and all-ſeeing eye of God.* Who but rank Ideots will play the fool, or give themſelves the liberty to things unbecoming in the preſence and eye of a Prince or Maſter, or any other for whom they have any reverence? Either men are for the greater part *real* Atheiſts, or they are ſuch hardned wretches as to think (or at leaſt venture it) that they may make more bold with God than with the leaſt of ten thouſand among ſinful mortal Direct 7. Pſal. 16.8.

tal men. Certainly the belief of a *Deity* is but a very superficial thing with *most*. But I hope I have now to deal with thee, who art perswaded to be a man, to behave thy self as such, and as a Christian also. And then I am sure thou wilt think my advice good, and knowest it to be so as far as thou hast tried it. Let a farther sense of this God enter thy soul, and it will not be easie for thee willingly or carelesly to give thy self (no not in thy inward man) a scope to any sin. Holy *David* practised this to very good purpose, *I have set the Lord always before me, because he is at my right hand; I shall not be moved.* It was common among the *Romans* to check any extravagancy they were entring on, by saying, *Cato sees you.* *Cato* being a severe man, and by office the Censor of mens behaviour, and much reverenced by the people, they feared to come under his reproof, and suspected his eye was by one means or other every where.

Pſal. 16.8.

Upon the consideration of the prevalency of the sense of Gods eye on us, those who live at loose, without this Law of restraint, are frequently in Scripture said to forget God, and to cast him behind their backs. *So are all the paths of all that forget God.* Let therefore this direction be well put in practice, and it will put the reins of the government of thine own spirit into thine hand. Thou wilt then as soon behave thy self as a malefactor in the eye of thy Judg, as before the eye of God. We may observe that sickness when it threatens death, or any eminent danger of death, gives men some sense of him with whom they have to do, quickens the thoughts of that account they are to give of themselves to God. What a change does this

Job 8. 13.

this make? How are men in such a case cured of their licentious extravagancies? If this were abiding on us at all times, as there is alway the same reason of it (for we alway are in God's eye, and take every step on the brink of Eternity) we should take heed to our selves at another rate than we do.

Eighthly, *Lay up in your hearts the Word of God, in its Light and Authority. I have hid thy Word in my Heart, that I might not sin against Thee.* This word of God is a word of power. *Where the Word of a King is, there is Power.* How much more where the Word of the Great GOD is? *Wherewith shall a young man cleanse his ways?* A great inquiry it is, and a very difficult task, young men having all temptations in their highest advantages attending them. As the question, so the answer is from the Divine Oracle: *By taking heed thereto, according to thy Word.* The Word of God in the Letter, or Matter of it, will not do the work alone; but in its Light and Authority it will be mighty to this end. Direct. 8. Psal. 119. v. 9.

Ninthly, *Come to a resolution to exercise (by the Grace of God) this rule over thine own Spirit.* The justice and goodness of it is beyond all dispute. All thy Objections against it, are but the blind reluctancies, and perverse Cavils of sensuality. Use a violence to thy corrupt inclinations. They are not worthy to be reasoned with any longer, when they refuse to submit to Reason. While the matter falls under Consideration, all or both sides is to be heard: But when once 'tis come to this plain result, that 'tis both thy duty and happiness to govern thy Spirit to a compliance with the Direct. 9.

the Divine Law, all genuine evidences are on that ſide, and not one rational evidence ſpeaks a good word for ſin, What remains but execution? Lay all the bonds imaginable on thy ſelf. The higheſt expreſſion of this we have in, the man after Gods own Heart: *I have ſworn, and I will perform it, that I will keep thy Righteous judgments.* A feeble fickle veleity, a faint purpoſe, would not ſerve the turn. He now girds up the loins of his mind, and acts like a man that would neither dally, nor be wheedled, nor be tantalized any longer.

Pſal. 119. v. 106.

Direct. 10. Tenthly, *Mortifie all Curioſity of gratifying the ſenſual Appetite. The luſt of the Eye, the luſt of the Fleſh, and the pride of Life*, are the great ſnares of men. When a Curioſity, *i. e.* an Apetition of that which has no neceſſity or ſubſtantial good in it, ſo as it muſt be had; men make that neceſſary which God and Nature never made ſo. This extravagancy makes the Spirit wanton and unruly; as we ſee in children never broken of their wills. And as *Jeremiah* complains of the great men of his time: *I will get me (ſaith he) to the great men, and I will ſpeak unto them: for they have known the way of the Lord, and the judgments of their God:* But ſee the diſapointment: *But theſe have altogether broken the yoke, and burſt the Bands.* The poor uneducated People were too low and poor ſpirited. Theſe great ones were too high. The poor were ignorant, ſhort ſighted, half men: but the great ones (tho knowing enough) their pampered Luſts made them to big for any bounds, great Beaſts that would not be tamed.

Job 21,14. The Apoſtle acted like a wiſe man in bringing under his Body, leſt he ſhould prove a caſt away: Not

Not that he cruciated it by any voluntary superstitions castigations, but he so Dieted it, that it might be useful; and not render his Spirit wanton and unruly.

Eleventh, *Entertain and foster those Evangelical, Vital, powerful Principles in thy Soul, which are the parts of the new Creature, and the Divine Image.* These are the Spirit of God (in the Scripture sphrase) dwelling in good and holy men. The Spirit of God in its works: the new Birth: the Love and Law of God written in the heart. A man thus principled, is he who can, who doth walk after the Spirit, and not after the Flesh. He hath his understanding enlightned by the Word and Spirit of God, and his passions or affections following the Divine Light; and not the earthly, and sensual, if not devillish Wisdom, as the Apostle ranks and styles them. Direct. 11.

Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is Liberty. Not licentiousness, but *Liberty.* And what is this Liberty, but a freedom from those bonds and Fetters of unbridled Lusts, and a walking without their prevailing contradictions, righteously, soberly, and godly in this World; following with the greatest spontaneity and self-gratifying, the Conduct of a Divinely instructed understanding. 2 Cor. 3. v. 17.

Twelfth, *Apply thy self to all Gods Ordinances, for Light and Strength to rule thine own Spirit; But withal and especially, to frequent, serious, fervent, believing Prayer.* He that would rule his own Spirit must beg his direction and assistance from him who is the God of Spirits. All endeavours without his assistance and blessing, are but labour in vain. It is he on whom is our whole dependance. Our Direct. 12.

life

Col. 33. *life is hid with Christ in God.* To relinquish or slight God as our dependance, is the greatest *outleap* and inordinacy we are capable of. In and by our addresses to this founta n of all good and goodness, we shall meet a sweet calm over-spreading our souls, in a full and delightful resignation of our all to God; and resting on that alsufficiency that in Christ is made ours. When *Job*'s Spirit was out of order, his Friend hit right on the cause, *Thou restrainest Prayer before God.* *Hannah*, a good Soul, was under the power of immoderate grief and bittterness; but she pours forth her Soul to God, and *she went away, and was no more sad.* When I find persons strugling under Convictions, applying themselves to God for help, *to will and to do of his good pleasure*: My hopes have some life in them; but till then, have but a poor foundation. I know it will be said, I prescribe prayer *so qualified*, that most who would gladly be what God would have them be, cannot find in their preparations. And indeed I am of thy mind, especially in the point of *beelieving*, that they shall be heard. But let me tell thee, that no man can pray seriously and fervently without Faith in some degree, no more than the Husbandman can Plough, and Sow, and be diligent without some hope of a Crop. I am almost confident that the issue of such Applications to the Throne of Grace, do seldom leave the Soul in a known sinful passion. Those intreaties of, and converses with God, tho they may and do often come short of our assurance of God's being reconciled to us, yet they never fail of reducing us to a disposition to a compleat dispositive reconciliation to the whole

Job 15. v. 4.

will

will of God. And I would not have you think that man prays without faith, that can heartily say, *Thy will be done*. But I shall also say, that tho all these qualifications of Prayer are thy duty, and very expedient to the end proposed, yet these very qualifications of Prayer must be prayed for. Let us give God what we have, and be thankful; and ask of God what we have not, that we may be more thankful. Not only *the answer of the lips, but the preparation of the heart also is from the Lord. If any man want wisdom, let him ask it of God, who giveth liberally and upbraideth not. He giveth his holy Spirit to them that ask it.* Wisdom from God, and the Spirit of God, what will not they be sufficient to teach, dispose, and enable to perform?

Prov. 16. 1

Jam. 1. 5.
Luk. 11. 13.

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